













## REVOLUTIONARY TYPES



# REVOLUTIONARY TYPES

BY

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## INTRODUCTION

WOMEN in the past having been more bound by convention than men, it is natural that revolution and revolutionists should interest them.

They seem to feel instinctively, even when unaware of it themselves, that they have all to gain by alteration of existing laws.

The present writer is no exception to the rule.

Moreover, in a valedictory chapter, which has made my preface quite uncalled for, she has not only nailed her revolutionary colours to the mast, in a passage of great faith and beauty, but to paraphrase an ancient Scottish story, she 'has taken the word o' God oot o' the minister's mooth.' The Types cover all the revolutionary gallery—that is, if, as some assert, Saint-Just was a socialist, for Harrison (would the Type selected had been honest Colonel Lilburne) was clearly an anarchist.

He who wishes to see Christ's kingdom upon earth, the Rule of the Saints, the Fifth Monarchy in operation, or what not, is almost certain to be an anarchist.



To him quite naturally all women's political hearts go out, for there is none of your damned logic about the position he assumes.

Now the enslavement of man by logic is as incomprehensible to most women as the slavish keeping of the plighted word appeared to the Turkish pasha in the story.

It is strange but true, that the man of Christ's kingdom upon earth should be an anarchist; but when we consider how many conventions would have to be broken to superinduce the coming of such a reign, it is easily understood that the easiest way is to break them all at once. This, I think, is the key to the enigma. Moreover, Christ himself to the Philistines and the vast majority of the Publicans (for one righteous Publican does not make a heaven) must have appeared as a breaker of all laws.

With the single exception of Washington, all the Types presented by the writer died either violent or miserable deaths.

But Washington, with all his virtues, never appealed to the imaginative mind after his inhuman refusal when a child to tell an almost necessary lie.

The rest, in their several degrees, all have their interest, some, as Toussaint L'Ouverture and Saint-Just, are amongst the most interesting of all characters which history can present.

It is well, I think, in this age of self-content, and

when in England nothing appears less possible than revolution, that this book should have been written, if only to remind the public that the brand is not extinct.

The thing that strikes me most about the men whose characters I read of in the book, is the extraordinary likeness that they present to ordinary men when not immediately engaged, as it were, on their work. Thus it is easy for almost any one to be revolutionist, and it may be that many are so, all unknown to themselves.

The thing wants no experience, there is neither grammar to be learned nor technique to be mastered. Nor is the revolutionary, as are the poet and the orator, born and not made.

Take Toussaint L'Ouverture. Up to the age of fifty-four (the age at which Columbus sailed from Palos to make a revolution in geography) he was a slave. As he said himself, '*J'ai été esclave, j'ose l'avouer. Mais je n'ai jamais essuyé même des reproches de la part de mes maîtres.*' Nothing more dignified was ever penned. Again he says, 'We went to labour in the field, my wife and I, hand in hand.' Nothing more like Arcadia is to be read in the whole field of pastoral literature.

Yet, given the opportunity, he straight became not only a revolutionary, but perhaps the noblest revolutionary that the world has seen.

Millions of miles and seas unnavigable, with

chains of mountains, compared to which Pichincha piled on Kinchinjunja would appear mere warts, part him from such a man as was Saint-Just or Harrison. These, in their rage for man's regeneration and Christ's reign, spared no one, but the ex-slave, raised suddenly to power, a victor in the field, adored by his whole race, and hemmed about with enemies, never once lost his head. His courage in the field was equalled by his rare talents in administration, both were excelled by his rare moderation and humanity. After him, the other Types the book contains seem made of common clay beside this figure in black kaolin.

Saint-Just, to whom the author has done the fullest justice, has always seemed to me an over-rated man. Bravery certainly he had, and youth, but with his youth, his talents, and his valour, he always strikes me as a 'poseur'; one, of course, who gave his head in payment of his 'pose,' but still a man who, had he had his way, would by his theories of liberty, have rendered life intolerable to those who differed with him.

So many revolutionaries seem to think that liberty is absolute, and that all men see liberty in the same hue. Literally it has a hundred forms and shades, and to force men to certain actions in the name of liberty is as rank tyranny as the worst actions of the worst Russian Czar or Turkish autocrat. No better exposition of the case is to be

found than when the preacher by his right divine made Scotland hell, all in the name of liberty, and with the cry upon his lips of liberty, and of Christ's Headship of the Church. I fear Saint-Just would have been 'unco ill to live wi',' and so would many of the Types the author writes about.

Fancy all England ruled by Harrison, with every one forced into church or chapel to give praises to the Lord, and to sing hymns to spiritual liberty.

*Per contra*, as the author lets us clearly see, good General Harrison was very near a heathen in the carnal part, a thing not seldom to be seen in saints of his calibre, and which no doubt has compensations to all those who look for liberty in a loose life with Puritanic faith.

Strange are the quips and cranks and quiddities of revolutionaries, as those of Mitchel, who, an exile from his native country, and hating England like the devil, had little sympathy for the revolutionaries of other lands. All socialists he held in execration, saying that they were worse than tigers, or mere Turks 'when all 's confessed o' them,' and was not, as it seems, averse to a good whiff of healing gunpowder when they rebelled. Imperfect sympathy, perhaps, and the false atmosphere of local patriotism, which has oppressed so many men, otherwise stout and true, in his case was to blame. The rational pride of all men in their

native land is praiseworthy, but he who sees only his native land, is blind or bourgeois, or at most a tyrant who has not come into his rights, by reason of the stronger tyrants who control the State.

Pym hardly was a revolutionary, and had he lived, most probably the eccentricities of Harrison and the Levellers would have induced him to become a Royalist, or, at the least, have forced him to retire to private life.

Still he is interesting as showing how men, the mildest and most constitutional of men, once started on the revolutionary road, go further than they had intended, and seeing freedom in the distance, one by one throw down the doors that once had seemed as fixed as is the world.

Of Arnold, little can be said. A man of action, thwarted and controlled by fools who never risked their skin, much should be forgiven to him, for he sinned much; and yet imagination lingers round him on his big black horse at Saratoga, where he led the van. Washington, cool and unemotional as we know he was, pitied and spoke for him, and all Americans should, we might think, forgive the man who, dying far from his country, called for his war-stained uniform with his last breath on earth.

The Roman tragedy of '48, with the Pope almost drawn into the European *maelström* of revolutionary thought, is interesting, and all true Catholics

should deplore the chance, once lost and not to be regained, of the church universal, with the Pope the shepherd of the poor.

Nothing in all the histories of the revolutions of the world is more stirring to the blood than the old tale, oft told, but well related by the author, and with sympathy for the young patriotic regiment, and Manara's death.

Young men, like women, have all to gain by revolution, but commonly when they have either aged or gained a step towards their goal they fall into the rear.

Men such as Félix Pyat, who at seventy was pulling down the column in the Place Vendôme, are usually more to be feared than youths, who love revolution for itself and not for its results.

Socialist agitators say that one man who in full work, upon a summer's evening, accepts their teaching (after the concluding chapter of the books, I think that I can say, 'accepts the light') is worth a dozen who at a strike upon a winter's day, hungry and desperate, come and enrol their names.

Manara and his youthful band of heroes represent the eternal protest of the young, and in so doing form a fitting contrast to the Pymys and Washingtons, the reasoning revolutionaries of middle age, with which the book begins.

It is significant that amongst the Types none of the revolutionaries, with the exception of

Toussaint l'Ouverture, are social rebels ; all the rest are Brixton pure and simple—men, honest and true, who strive to substitute some form of government for another, and would have been as pleased to see the social fabric administered by the possessing class as would have been the veriest emperor, or millionaire.

Still, take them for all in all, undoubtedly they were worth a whole wilderness of Liberal politicians, and their worst vices were as virtues compared to the best qualities of those they strove against.

They all had faith, and he who has it, in a manner does possess the earth, as they all did during their tossed and agitated lives.

That they died young and with their illusions on them, or old, forsaken, disillusioned, but still steadfast, is a detail ; even the worst of them—the traitor-patriot—at the last, heard the old voices calling, and departed in the faith.

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM.

# REVOLUTIONARY TYPES

JOHN PYM

1586-1643

THE statesman who, before Cromwell rose to pre-eminence, more than any other, held the reins of the English revolution and directed its course, was John Pym. He it was to whom Clarendon paid the high compliment of declaring that he had been the man 'most able to do hurt that hath lived in any time'; and his name has been said to have gone out into the world as 'almost a synonym for the Parliament of England.'

If there is a certain lack of interest attaching to him, this last tribute of praise may supply a key to it. There are figures apt, like those in an allegorical play, to stand for attributes rather than for personages of flesh and blood. Such a man will, in this way, represent justice, another the monarchical principle, a third tyranny or oppression; and being unconsciously regarded as the embodiment of an abstract idea, they inevitably lose in human interest.

In this manner Pym might well be accepted as the representative of constitutional liberty. To its vindication his public life was dedicated; while of his private affairs so little is known that it would be easier in his case than in most others to merge the man in the politician.



When studying the lives of the makers of history it is indeed not difficult to overlook the supreme significance to each of that *vie intime* carried on alongside of the great events with which their names are associated. Yet how little those events—the convulsions, it may be, which shook a hemisphere—must have mattered to the men themselves in comparison with the joys or sorrows, the fears and hopes and regrets, shared by the most obscure of their contemporaries; and how seldom, if the truth were known, can the fate of an empire hold its own against the paramount importance of a personal experience. The success of a campaign is of small account to the man who misses one face from the returning battalion; and Joab's reproach—'If Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well'—might have been addressed to many, besides the Jewish King, to whom the fate of a nation has been as nothing in comparison with a single worthless life.

Here and there it is true that exceptions will occur. The abstract enthusiasm of the fanatic may avail to dwarf individual issues. A saint or a patriot may be content to lose his life, if so be that he may find it; or the consciousness of standing at the helm and guiding the vessel may serve to modify the domination of private interests. Yet, even in unexpected quarters, proof enough is to be found of the contrary. Of Oliver Cromwell we read, that when his daughter lay dying, he was, for fourteen days, 'unable to attend to any public business

whatever'—the State, with its necessities, waiting and watching with him meanwhile by her bedside; while who can doubt that to have had back the young son, whose death 'went as a dagger to my heart, indeed it did,' it would have seemed a little thing to the man charged with the destinies of England to relinquish all his greatness?

In the case of Pym, the evidence available as to his private affairs is chiefly that afforded by a blank. Some blanks, however, are very significant; and the one in question, if it does not draw back the veil covering that hidden portion of his life, may at least bring home to us a wholesome sense of our own ignorance, and serve to remind the reader that any picture of the man, as we know him, can only be one-sided.

In 1614, when he was thirty, Pym married. He had already made his mark on public life; had sat in Parliament, and shared in the excitement of practical politics. He had been singled out for notice by the Earl of Bedford, prominent amongst the Liberal leaders; and, lastly, he had in all probability received the testimony to the position and influence he had already achieved implied in a first imprisonment. During the six years—1614 to 1620—covered by his brief married life, public affairs were daily assuming a more menacing aspect. The struggle between constitutional liberty and despotism was becoming more and more acute, the hostility between King and people more marked. James was grovelling before Spain; Raleigh's judicial murder had been accomplished.

To a glance as keen and sagacious as that of the future Puritan leader the approach of a great crisis, a turning-point in the history of the nation, must have been apparent. Yet for those six years, from his marriage onwards till the death of his wife in 1620, he disappeared from public life. It is true that no Parliament sat during the interval; but employment and means of keeping themselves before the public eye were not wanting to those who sought them. Eliot, Pym's junior by six years, and who entered upon Parliamentary life at the same time, was Vice-Admiral of Devon; Wentworth (afterwards Lord Strafford), who had likewise sat with him in the House, and still adhered to the popular side in politics, had been made Keeper of the Archives for the West Riding, a coveted and important office. But there is no indication that Pym asked or obtained any post, or that he busied himself in public affairs. All that is known of the interval, occurring when he was in the very prime of manhood, is that it was spent, to quote a contemporary divine, in the companionship of 'a most loving, holy, and helpfull wife; whose learning rare in that sex, whose virtues rarer in this age, whose religion the rarest adornment of all the rest, could not choose but level the sorrow of losing her with the former comfort of enjoying her.' We also know that she bore him five children before she went her way hence. But of the rest of that period no record remains. Not till after her death does Pym reappear, as member for Calne, to resume his place in the great struggle then going

forward ; whether embittered by sorrow, or softened by the memory of past happiness, none can tell, any more than they can relate the story of that interlude of love and peace. 'These years,' says Pym's biographer, 'were probably passed in retirement, where the mind does not find it difficult to imagine him, strengthening himself, in the calmness of domestic quiet, for the absolute devotion of his great faculties and deep affections to that old cause which was now again, not dimly, dawning upon the world.' It may have been as Mr. Forster suggests. The interval may have been spent in conscious preparation for the coming fight. But another explanation is possible. It is mostly the unhappy who are spurred into restless energy, the unsatisfied who seek a refuge in strenuous activities. Was it perhaps by the death of Pym's wife that the man who had loved her was driven to dedicate himself, heart and soul, to the national cause? It is impossible to say. The facts that are certain are these—so long as his wife lived he would appear to have been content with the uneventful and placid life of a Somersetshire gentleman; at her death alone he emerged once more into public view ; in an age when such constancy was specially rare, left a widower at thirty-six, with the charge of five little children, he never filled her place ; and only twenty years later is his name once more definitely associated with that of a woman—the notorious Lady Carlisle.

In reference to Pym's life of action and the work he accomplished this hiatus in his history is

of little consequence. So long as the day's task is done it is of comparatively small moment to the world at large whether the labourer is driven into the field by choice or through necessity. But as an indication of character the circumstances are worth taking into account. There are men whom it is difficult to imagine remaining content in an atmosphere of tranquillity. They belong to the storm, and find their pleasure in the excitement of the whirlwind. Others are swept out into the tempest by the imperative demand of duty or of conscience alone. Such a man was Washington: such was also Toussaint: such, it is easy to imagine, was John Pym.

At the time of his re-entering Parliament in 1620, to become almost at once a recognised power in the national party, he was therefore fresh from six years' retirement, passed in his Somersetshire home—a man whom it might well seem a misapplication of language to rank amongst revolutionists. Strictly speaking, he has, of course, the fullest right to the title. He was, from the first, in the forefront of the battle culminating in the execution of the King and the establishment of the new government; nor did any politician take a more active part in that resistance to the encroachments of the Crown which terminated in open rebellion. Yet none could have been further removed from the spirit of the demagogue, or from the violence, the fanaticism, and the passion afterwards so common amongst those who lifted and held aloft the standard of revolt. Both Pym

and Hampden—Pym's 'second self'—were, in fact, specially representative of the spirit of the English revolution—at least in its earlier stages—'a revolution of principle, but of principle couched in precedent.'<sup>1</sup> Such men had no desire to break with the past. On that past, on the contrary, with its title-deeds of liberty, they based their claims. In the very act of revolt they were conservative.

They came of a class to which such conservatism is natural. Like most of the earlier leaders of his party, Pym was well born. Belonging to a family of old descent and good means, he had carried the traditions of his birth and breeding into his political creed. Evidence of the views he held upon such questions as class distinctions and hereditary rank is afforded by his speech on the impeachment of the Duke of Buckingham. The mushroom nobility created by the patronage of the King's favourite could only be matter of contempt to the commoner conscious of his own old blood. The ancient peerage, however, was another matter. For this he neither felt nor affected anything but a respect which, in these later days, might even be deemed exaggerated. In the speech made before the House of Lords he appealed to it on its own behalf.

By one article of the impeachment the Duke stood charged with having been the means of procuring titles, as well as grants of land, for creatures of his own, unworthy of such distinction. Many, before and after the Duke of Buckingham,

<sup>1</sup> Goldwin Smith, *Three English Statesmen*.

might be accused of the same crime ; and by some friends of progress the consequent adulteration of the ancient nobility would be viewed with indifference if not with satisfaction, as tending to lower in public estimation the whole body. But in the eyes of Pym and his friends the offence was no light one.

Having rehearsed the accusation, he proceeded to deal with it. He had, as Clarendon admits, 'a very comely and grave way of expressing himself,' and he must have felt strongly on the subject. Honours conferred by the King, he said, lifting as they did men above others, should be met by virtue beyond others ; more especially as, being perpetual, merit in the first root of the honour should transmit a vigorous example to their successors, to raise them to an imitation of the like. The grievance, therefore, charged upon the Duke was great ; being prejudicial, first, to the noble barons ; secondly, to the King ; thirdly, to the kingdom. It was prejudicial to the high court of peers because, should those be made members of that great body who were unqualified for the performance of its functions, the whole body must needs be thereby prejudiced ; as water, added to wine, enfeebles the spirit. By making honour ordinary, it was also rendered an incompetent reward for extraordinary virtue. Men, being ennobled, were taken out of the press of the common sort ; and how could such preferment choose but fall in estimation when honour itself was made a press ?

In this vindication, before the Lords themselves, of their great position and its need of guardianship, Pym indicated clearly his own views upon distinctions of rank and place. In Buckingham he attacked the man who had injured, not the people alone, but, still more vitally, his own order. Nor was he merely using, after the fashion of the opportunist, the weapon lying most convenient to his hand at the moment. Nothing is more remarkable in Pym than the continuity and stability of his political and social faith. Most men change or modify their creeds, as circumstances alter around them. It needs more strength and firmer conviction than are commonly to be found in the leaders of a popular movement to maintain a stable position while the world, as it were, sweeps past. Some of the comrades who had stood shoulder to shoulder with Pym—as Falkland and Wentworth—were carried back by the wave of reaction. Others were dashed onward to republicanism. But Pym remained steady to his early ideals. Sixteen years after the impeachment of Buckingham, he once more addressed the House of Lords, then broken and divided in its counsels. In solemnly adjuring its members to make common cause with the Lower House in securing the safety of the nation, he sounded the self-same note. Whether the country was to be lost or saved, he told them, the House of Commons would be sorry that the story of that Parliament should tell posterity that it had been enforced to save the kingdom alone; and that the Peers, having so great an interest, in



respect of their great estates and high degrees, in the good success of those endeavours, should have had no part in its preservation. But let them apply themselves to the preservation of King and kingdom, and he engaged, in the name of all the Commons of England, that they should be bravely seconded. The Pym of 1642 was still the Pym of 1626.

In religious matters, no less than in politics, Pym was, so far as circumstances admitted, likewise conservative. To quote his own words, used towards the end of his life, he was 'a faithful son of the Protestant religion.' In matters of church government, he was a temperate Episcopalian; bitterly opposed to the party within the Establishment led by Archbishop Laud—'that persecutor in the name of an authority which was itself the rebel of yesterday';<sup>1</sup> and which had—its chiefest offence in his eyes—become the ally and support of despotism. Liberty being his watchword, her cause his own, it is not surprising that, though no fanatic, a touch of violence should have mingled with his reprobation both of Rome—to the Puritan the synonym of oppression—and of those within the national Church who had constituted themselves in no less a degree the advocates of absolute authority. At the same time, it is noteworthy that whilst openly expressing his dislike for their spiritual teaching, it was mainly at their political influence that his blows were directed. Thus in his speech on the occasion of Laud's

<sup>1</sup> Goldwin Smith, *Three English Statesmen*.

impeachment, the endeavour of the Archbishop to introduce arbitrary government, the sermons preached in its defence, the corrupt administration of justice, and the illegal enactments of canon law, take precedence of such spiritual matters as the Romanising forces at work within the national Church, intrigues with Rome, intolerance, and persecution.

In this particular instance it is true that the order of the articles of the impeachment was responsible for the form taken by Pym's speech; but even if the impeachment had not been cast on a model of his own, it is probable that the form of it met with his entire approval. It has been pointed out that it was his invariable habit to treat religion as an element of political government. 'To him, a true political government *was* religion. . . . To be free in thought and act, to secure responsibility in government and security in the public liberties, was with him to set up the true religion in its purity.'<sup>1</sup> 'The greatest liberty of the kingdom,' he himself declared, in the course of his great speech on the reassembling of Parliament in 1640, after an interval of eleven years, 'is religion . . . and no impositions are so grievous as those that are laid on the soul.'

Men's faith takes its colour and character from their lives. To the Puritan soldier, fighting, though with carnal weapons, in what he conceived to be heaven's cause, God was pre-eminently the great General, Commander-in-chief of the

<sup>1</sup> John Forster, *Life of Pym*.

armies of the elect. In the same way, the statesman of the day, profoundly impressed with the dignity of his office and his own responsibility, felt himself to be legislating under direct divine presidency. It is a significant fact that, rigid Sabbatarians as were most of the Puritan leaders, Sunday was made use of at this time, at certain important junctures, for the transaction of secular business. 'They made, as it were, their business Heaven's own.'<sup>1</sup>

Such being in outline Pym's views upon religious matters, he must have been out of sympathy with many of his fellow-workers, and the headstrong zeal of such sects as the Independents or the Fifth Monarchy Men must have been at least as distasteful to him as the errors he discerned in older forms of belief. It was not a time, however, when a man could refuse co-operation to those with whom he was not in full agreement, and Pym was not likely to permit such causes to interfere with united action.

In secular matters, no less than in religious, he had the calm, as well as the steadfastness, belonging to firm conviction. Not many men were less liable to be swayed by emotion or by sentiment. It is therefore the more interesting to note the few occasions when the self-control of his habitual demeanour was broken down by an overwhelming tide of grief or anger. Of these occasions two are specially conspicuous. The first was that memorable 5th of June, 1628, when the message brought to

<sup>1</sup> John Forster, *Life of Pym*.

the House of Commons from the King prohibiting any aspersions on ministers or government, gave rise to a scene as striking as any that followed. The tragedy of the situation at the special stage then reached in the struggle lay, as Mr. Forster has pointed out, in the conflict between the sentiment of loyalty, still so powerful even with those forced into an attitude of opposition, and the obligation laid upon them, by conscience and duty to the country, of resistance to Charles's unlawful demands. On that June day, those two forces met and struggled for mastery; a storm of emotion shook the House, and the strange spectacle was seen of man after man in tears. As one speaker followed another in the endeavour to give expression to the regrets and forebodings caused by the message—called by Sir Robert Philips 'the saddest message of the greatest loss in the world'—one after another was compelled to relinquish the attempt. Spreading from man to man, the infection of uncontrollable emotion rendered each in turn incapable of speech. Amongst those thus affected was Pym. The scene, difficult as it is to realise at the present time, must have left upon the men who took part in it a mark for life.

The second occasion when, according to common report, Pym's wrath got the better of him and outran the bounds within which it was commonly confined, was of a different nature. It was that of the apostasy of the future Lord Strafford from the cause of the people. Into the motives and nature of his change of front there is no room to enter

here. To those whom he has left, a soldier found fighting under the enemy's flag is a traitor, a deserter, and a coward. But treachery, desertion, and cowardice, in the criminal sense of the terms, are less frequent than one would suppose, nor are they qualities with which Strafford has been credited by posterity. It is not, however, at the hands of a man's earlier brothers-in-arms that he can fairly expect strict and impartial justice. Wentworth and Pym had been close friends and fellow-workers. To quote Pym's speech, when his final attack upon his early associate was made, Strafford was 'a man who in the memory of many present had sat in that House an earnest vindicator of the laws, and a most zealous assertor and champion for the liberties of the people.' Pym's own confidence in him had been unbounded. The more bitter, therefore, was his indignation when it became clear that, in heart if not yet avowedly, Wentworth had gone over to the enemy. By Wentworth's desire the two met at Greenwich at a time when his change of temper was still recent; and, talking together, the King's new ally dwelt on the dangers attaching to the course pursued by the national party and upon advantages to be gained by an accommodation with the Court.

Discerning the drift of his argument, Pym's rare passion blazed forth. Cutting short Wentworth's explanations, he refused to hear him out. He need not, he said, use all this art to let him know that he had a mind to leave his old comrades. And

then he added, if report be true, a strange and sinister promise. 'Remember,' he is said to have told Strafford, 'remember that though you leave us now, I will never leave you while your head is on your shoulders.'

It might, at the time, have seemed an idle threat. But twelve years later Pym redeemed his pledge; when, rising in the House of Commons, a week after the meeting of the Long Parliament, he moved the impeachment of his former associate. That same afternoon the two met face to face, Strafford in his place in the House of Lords, Pym, spokesman of the Commons, as, standing at the bar, he accused Thomas, Earl of Strafford, of high treason. Throughout the following trial Pym occupied a place only second in the public sight to that of the doomed man. No remembrance of past affection availed to stay his hand. Yet once it is recorded that old recollections, suddenly forced upon him, again shook his self-control. The incident, so often told, must be repeated here.

At the close of his last great speech Pym had designated the penalty due to the misdeeds of the accused. Death, and no lesser punishment, should be their reward. 'Nothing,' he declared, 'can be more equal than that he should perish by the justice of that law which he would have subverted. Neither will this be a new way of blood. There are marks enough to trace this law to the very original of this kingdom; and if it hath not been put in execution, as he allegeth, this two hundred and forty years, it was not for want of law, but that

all that time hath not bred a man bold enough to commit such crimes as these.'

Throughout the speech the eyes of Strafford had remained fixed upon his early friend, transformed into his relentless enemy. Now, suddenly lifting his own, Pym met his glance. As he did so, the iron self-possession of the Puritan leader was shaken; and he faltered in his speech. 'His papers he looked upon, but they could not help him.' It was but for a moment. Recovering himself, he returned to the business in hand, and concluded his arraignment.

Some months before this scene took place Pym had been definitely accepted as the leader of his party. When the Short Parliament met many gaps had been found to exist in the popular ranks. Eliot was dead in his prison. Coke and Philips had also passed away. Most of those assembled sat in Parliament for the first time. One politician, however, possessed both ability and experience. 'Whilst men gazed upon each other, looking who should begin, Mr. Pym, a man of good reputation but much better known afterwards, brake the ice.'

He broke it to good purpose. For close upon two hours he spoke, reciting the catalogue of the nation's grievances. When he sat down his position was assured. The effect of his speech—widely circulated—was felt far and wide; while the emphatic approval of the House was expressed by a resolution decreeing that the consideration of grievances should take precedence of supply.

During the brief existence of the Short Parliament he fully maintained the position he had achieved ; taking a leading part both in disputes with the Upper House and in the resistance offered to the King's demands, until the struggle was suddenly cut short by the dissolution of Parliament.

Charles had committed a fatal error. The ' sudden and abrupt dissolution of Parliaments ' had been one of the very grievances dealt with by Pym in his great speech. It was a hard case, he had argued, that a private man should be put to death unheard. Yet this was the punishment inflicted on Parliament, to the equal detriment of King and country. ' The words of dying men are full of piercing affections.' Granted the privilege of speech, the Commons would so express their love as to clear themselves from the aspersions cast upon them ; besides commending to their master such measures as would most conduce to his own honour and to the public good. But ' we have not been permitted to pour out our last sighs and groans into the bosom of our dear sovereign.' Parliament had, in fact, been made to die intestate.

To this and similar complaints the answer of Charles was yet another abrupt dissolution. The measure, however, met with a different reception than on former occasions. The time for indulging a hope of any amicable solution of the existing controversy was drawing to an end. St. John no doubt spoke the mind of many of his friends when



he told the melancholy Clarendon that all was well—that affairs must be worse before they were better, the Parliament then sitting having been unfitted to cope with the situation.

That the next should be better qualified for the task was the determination of the popular leaders, and they spared no pains to ensure success. Pym in especial was hard at work. The business of organisation, correspondence with the Scotch Commissioners, the direction of a private press and other such duties kept him well employed through summer and autumn. By November the anticipations of the opposition had found fulfilment. The King had been forced to issue writs for the assembling of a new Parliament, and it met upon the third of the month.

Again Pym was the moving and directing spirit of his party. His first great work was the impeachment of Strafford; his second that of Laud. Six months after the opening of Parliament both were in the Tower; the Lord Keeper had fled the country, and Windebank, the Secretary, had likewise escaped. Shortly after, the Star Chamber, the High Commission, and the other strongholds of despotism had been abolished; whilst in May, a crowning victory was won in the King's assent to the Bill providing that the present Parliament should not be dissolved without its own consent. The autocracy of Parliament had practically replaced the autocracy of the King. When the House adjourned in September it might well be content with the achievements of the session.

About this time Pym's own personality, as distinct from that of the politician or the leader of a party, emerges for a moment into sight. His prominent position attracted of necessity the attention of both friend and foe. Not long afterwards it was considered worth while to attempt his destruction by means of a rag taken from a plague sore; and a victim stabbed in Westminster Hall was said to have lost his life through being 'mistaken for Mr. Pym.' Throughout the country his name was the object of hatred or love, veneration or contempt.

Under these circumstances it was natural that his private character should not escape discussion. The lampoons of ribald royalists are not convincing evidence; but though his enemies' assertions must be received with reservation, it is likely enough that he laid himself open to some, at least, of their attacks. That he was no Puritan, strictly speaking, is certain; nor is it probable that, escaping their failings, he should have displayed their special virtues.

It was in particular with the notorious Lady Carlisle, formerly Strafford's devoted friend, that his name was associated, though the nature of their intimacy remains uncertain.<sup>1</sup> In this especial instance, indeed, politics may have been associated with sentiment; for the friendship of a woman who contrived, in spite of her connection with the liberal leader, to maintain her credit at Court must have been of no small value, and it is said that in

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Forster's latest view limits it to friendship.

consequence of it the interior of Whitehall was better known to the patriot than that of the House of Commons to the King. It was not to be long before she was to give a notable proof of her usefulness.

Whatever may have been the amount of truth contained in the reports current about him, Pym can have had but little leisure for the relaxations of private life. Disquieting news came from the north, whither Hampden with six of his colleagues had been sent to watch the proceedings of the King; and on the reassembling of Parliament the military outposts of the city were occupied, and the Houses themselves placed under the protection of the Westminster train-bands. In the very successes by which the previous session had been attended, the more sagacious of the popular leaders must have discerned a danger of reaction. So far all lovers of constitutional liberty had united in resistance to despotism. But the situation was rapidly changing; and the spectacle of the representative of an ancient monarchy shorn of his prerogatives, cramped, fettered, and coming near to be at the mercy of his subjects, was well adapted to enlist on his side both chivalry and the incalculable force of sentiment. The republicans, daily gaining in strength, were alienating the more temperate friends of reform; and the violence of the sectaries was ranging against them and their party those more moderate churchmen who had hitherto thrown in their lot with the people. An ominous indication of the severing forces at work

was afforded by the debate—upon the occasion of its reintroduction, counselled by Pym—on the Bill directed against the presence of the Bishops in the House of Lords. Falkland, with Hyde, placed themselves in opposition to the measure ; the first, in answer to Hampden's reproach at his change of front since last the Bill had been under discussion, replying frankly that he had formerly been 'persuaded to believe many things which he had since found to be untrue, and therefore he had changed his opinion in many particulars, as well as to things as to persons.' There could be no doubt that Lord Falkland was spokesman for many who shared his views and his misgivings, and his candid avowal must have impressed upon the popular party a sense of the instability of their position.

Pym, meanwhile, had reached the height of his reputation. He was, says Nalson, 'one of the greatest idols of the faction.' And yet one cannot but feel him to have been a curious object for the idolatry of the populace. Able, honest, and conscientious as he was, it is not easy to imagine him possessed of the gifts commonly attracting the homage of the multitude. His services to the country had no doubt been great. But it is not on account of men's services that men are chiefly loved ; nor are those instruments invariably most prized which have laboured with the greatest effect.

If the nation's affection on the one hand witnessed to the position he had achieved, the

enmity of the people's enemies bore testimony no less strong. Not alone against his life were the attempts of the baser sort amongst them directed. Other means than death might be used to silence the great orator and debater in Parliament; and it was found necessary to protect him, by a special order, from suits designed to deprive him of his position and privileges.

His presence in the House could indeed have been ill spared. Events were hurrying on towards the open and final breach between King and Parliament; and at every stage of the contest Pym's was the most prominent figure on his own side; whilst, when the King's most fatal act of folly was committed, in the attempted arrest of the Five Members, he enjoyed the honour of being chief amongst the intended victims.

The scene stands out, even amongst the dramatic incidents crowding the history of those days—Lady Carlisle's warning, conveyed to the man now standing to her in the place of the dead Strafford; his consequent withdrawal, together with his four colleagues; the House awaiting in ominous silence the arrival of the King; Charles himself in possession of the Speaker's chair; his demand by name for Mr. Pym; and lastly his angry exit when it was clear that the risk had been run to no purpose; the mutterings of 'privilege, privilege' as he passed out; and his return, foiled, to Whitehall.

The stroke had been a desperate one—the stake that of a gambler who risks all upon a single throw

of the dice. Had Charles succeeded, the councils of the national party might have been paralysed by the removal of their leaders. But in aiming his blow at Pym and Hampden, he had struck at the heart of the people, and they were not likely to forget or forgive the blow. In the city next day the cries of privilege pursued him ; whilst one voice raised in the crowd must have had a still more sinister sound, for it echoed the war-cry of the Jewish people when they rose in rebellion against their King, 'To your tents, O Israel!' Four thousand Buckinghamshire men rode up to London to secure the safety of Hampden ; and a voluntary bodyguard gathered in immense numbers for the protection of Pym. When, on January 11, Charles's retractation was made, it came too late. London was in gala, decorated with flags and bunting ; and the progress of the Five Members, recalled to Westminster, was like that of victors crowned with laurel.

The night before, Charles had practically abandoned the field, and had quitted his capital. He returned to it no more till he was brought there a captive.

During the eight months intervening before the breaking out of actual hostilities, each party was organising its resources and making ready for the appeal to arms. Men were taking sides, some, possibly, with the joyous excitement of the born soldier ; others with deep sadness and heaviness of heart. Others, again, were torn by the struggle of conflicting duties : 'I have eaten the King's

bread near thirty years,' said Verney, Charles's standard-bearer, 'and I will not do so base a thing to forsake him. I choose rather to lose my life (which I am sure I shall do) to preserve and defend those things which are against my conscience to preserve and defend.' Friend was ranged against friend: 'The great God,' wrote Sir William Waller to the Royalist, Sir Ralph Hopton, 'knows with what bitterness I go upon this service. . . . We are both upon the stage, and must act the parts that are assigned us in the tragedy. Let us do it in a way of honour, and without personal animosities.'

Pym, for his part, was no soldier. Whilst others took the field, he remained in London, to attend there to the conduct of affairs. To him, too, the situation must have been full of sadness. Clinging to law, clinging—so far as he was able—to order, as a man of his temper must have done, he was engaged in the vain attempt 'to make the parchment of legality cover a revolution.'<sup>1</sup> To realise that the feat was impossible must have been to him a bitter thing. Yet, since the kingdom was thus, and thus only, to be saved or lost, he never flinched from facing the necessary struggle, striving to associate in it the Upper House, vacillating and timorous as it almost inevitably was.

Within Parliament and outside it, his exertions were unwearied, almost incredible. Wherever there was danger of compromise, wherever it

<sup>1</sup> *Three English Statesmen.*

seemed possible that cowardly counsels would prevail, there he was to be found, encouraging, exhorting, advising. Now at Westminster, now in the camp, again in London's stronghold, the city, he is to be caught sight of, moving from place to place, his finger on the pulse of the nation, regulating, controlling, directing. His eminence was recognised by all. When Charles, flushed by the successes achieved during the first months of the war, issued a proclamation to the rebels, Pym, as was due to his great position, was excluded from the pardon offered to lesser offenders. Upon that proclamation followed what must be regarded as the retort of the popular leader—the impeachment of the Queen. If one discerns in the measure a rare touch of bravado, it may be that it was intentional, and that the statesman, astute and sagacious, had learnt that bravado has its use when a nation is looking on. Possibly also, according to another explanation, his object may have been to render the breach between King and Commons, in spite of more timid counsels, irreparable.

The time, however, was drawing near when Pym would be called upon to surrender the direction of affairs into other hands. The life he had led, of incessant toil and wearing anxiety, was not one calculated to conduce to the prolongation of a man's days. Hampden had already fallen on the field of battle, and the work of his great colleague was likewise nearly over. Friend and foe were watching his physical decline, the one with dread,



the other with rising hopes. But, worn and exhausted in body, he was to give another proof that he was yet too strong for his enemies. Sanguine at the success still attending the royalist arms, the spirits of the Cavaliers were high; and Essex himself, Commander-in-chief of the Puritan forces, was leaning towards a reconciliation with the Court, at a stage in the contest when a reconciliation could scarcely choose but wear the complexion of a submission.

The views of the Commander-in-chief found strong support in the House of Commons, and only by a majority of two was a petition embodying them rejected. Pym did not content himself with that narrow victory. Striving to place the cause on a firmer basis, he sought, accompanied by St. John, Essex at the seat of war; and, according to Clarendon, so succeeded in his mission that he 'wholly changed him, and wrought him to that temper which he afterwards swerved not from.'

It was the great leader's last triumph. The fight, for him, was over. In the words of a contemporary royalist, he was 'crawling to his grave as fast as he could.'

Horses were waiting, saddled, to carry the good news of his death to Oxford; bonfires were ready to be lit. Yet the effect of a prolongation of his life might have been different to that anticipated by his enemies. During the last year he had put forth, in reply to certain charges preferred against him, what may be termed a confession of his

political faith. In this document he avowed his continued attachment to the form of government contained in a constitutional monarchy. No reason exists to doubt the sincerity of the profession ; and there are those who believe that, had he and Hampden remained alive, their influence might have availed to secure a settlement on these lines. The 'King and kingdom' in his mind, as on his lips, were linked together by the habit of a life-time and the tradition of centuries. As he lay dying he was overheard—strangely, one would imagine, in the ears of those who listened—praying 'importunately' for the King and his posterity, as well as for Parliament and people. It is not by their loyalty that even those most attached to the monarchy amongst us at the present time are likely to be preoccupied upon their death-beds ; and the fact that his sovereign was the subject of the dying petitions of the rebel leader marks the distance we have travelled since that day.

The end came in great tranquillity and peace. Living—so he said—he would have done what service he could. Dying, he should go to the God whom he had served. Declaring himself thus indifferent as to the issues of life or death, he presently passed, in great contentment, away. He had learnt the fact that no man is indispensable. '*Au-dessus l'humanité marche toujours.*' The knowledge that it is so is a great man's consolation when death bids him take his hand from the plough.

He was buried in Westminster Abbey, hard by

the arena where his battles had been fought and his triumphs won ; the entire House of Commons accompanying him, as was fitting, to the grave. At the Restoration, when God's acre was weeded after the fashion of that day, his body was taken from the tomb and was flung out into the adjoining churchyard.

## THOMAS HARRISON

1606-1660

THE Puritan revolutionist of the seventeenth century, or, to speak more accurately, the body to which he belonged—since individuals of his type are to be found in all ages—occupies a position more or less unique in modern times.

Many who have set their hands to the reconstruction of society have entered upon the struggle with a belief as firm that their cause enjoyed the special protection of heaven; and in their war against the different forms of tyranny and oppression have been consoled and strengthened by a confidence in the divine assistance. Others, less fortunate, have embarked upon their enterprise looking for no such support. In their eyes, men have been left to win unaided their own victories, to work out their salvation unassisted; and counting upon no future sphere in which the balances of good and evil fortune may be re-adjusted and wrongs redressed, they have sought the more unweariedly to render worth living the short span of existence allotted to man here below.

The Puritan's standpoint is distinct from that of either of these classes. His cause was not only indirectly and implicitly the cause of God, inas-

much as justice and righteousness and liberty are pleasing to the divine Ruler of men, to whom wrongdoing and cruelty are hateful. This it was indeed; but it was more. It was God's own special cause. The war was carried on under the leadership of a Captain who, as in the case of the Israelites of old, went before His people into battle, gave the victory into their hands, or crowned their apparent defeat with the eternal and unfading laurels of martyrdom. The strife was not waged against the tyranny of kings or the injustice of a political system alone. It was directed, besides this and chiefly, at a spiritual despotism usurping the name of religion, against Anti-Christ blasphemously masquerading in the place of God.

In this lay the peculiar power of the Puritan; it was his immeasurable advantage. He fought, in absolute good faith, as the lieutenant of the Lord. Cant, with which he has been so often taunted, may indeed have crept in. Dogging, as it does like an evil shadow, the steps of religion, the genuine features of one man become the mask of another, and the world, lacking time for fine distinctions, includes the two in a common condemnation. But the compelling force which could throw an entire regiment upon its knees in the thick of a battle was due to something widely different from cant. It was the result of a belief in a present God, the recognition of the personal leadership of a Divine General.

The seventeenth century was a time when the modern theory that few things are worth living for

and none worth dying for, counted few adherents. The Puritan—the special product of the age—was the spiritual descendant, vehemently as both would have repudiated the connection, of Torquemada and the Inquisition. Unlike in much, they were at one in their subscription to St. Augustine's dictum, *Quidquid aeternum non est, nihil est*, and both alike carried theory into practice.

It was also one of those recurrent epochs in the world's history when the fierceness of opposing principles lends to clashing opinions the stimulus necessary to weld all the forces of a man's nature, good and bad, into one compact mass; and when side issues, destructive to the unity of lives and the singleness of purposes, so far as those engaged in the prevailing struggle were concerned, scarcely existed. In that 'colony of God, the soul,' many warring forces are found arrayed against each other. The heart rebels against the dictates of the brain; reason and sentiment are at variance; imagination acts as a check upon the domination of fact; and a certain balance of power is thus secured. But in the case of the Puritan no such modifying process was at work. In a simplicity which came near to being sublime, he was at one with himself. Ranged in opposition to a world of sense, he was at once a dreamer bent upon the materialisation of an idea, a combatant intent upon the humiliation of a foe, a disciple absorbed in the worship of a God. Identifying himself with the divine quarrel, charged with a mission it was blasphemy to question, his very passions were

enlisted in its service ; vengeance became a virtue, and to show mercy to the enemy a crime.

Picture after picture remains, characteristic of the spirit in which the Puritan soldier fought and died. To cite one only : ' Sir,' wrote Cromwell, communicating to his brother-in-law the death of his son at Marston Moor, ' God has taken away your eldest son by a cannon-shot. . . . He was a gallant young man, exceeding gracious. God give you His comfort. Before his death he was so full of comfort that to Frank Russel and myself he could not express it, " It was so great above his pain." A little after he said, One thing lay upon his spirit. I asked him, What that was? He told me it was, That God had not suffered him to be any more the executioner of His enemies.'

The sole regret of the dying man is more illustrative of the attitude of the Puritan soldier than pages of description. His enemies were God's, God's his.

Besides his absolute singleness of aim and his fusion of aspiration, he possessed another point of vantage. Debarred, by the nature of the case, from attaining the full satisfaction of his desire, fulfilment was never for him, as so often happens, the eclipse of hope. ' The joy of the road'—

' the joy which is never won,

The journeying after the journeying sun,'

was pre-eminently his. Death itself had nothing final about it ; it was no more than the stepping-stone and gateway to glory, the supreme seal of victory.

This view, above all, of a culmination wearing

to most men the aspect of at least a personal defeat, sets the spiritual revolutionist apart from those whose battle is waged under other banners, and renders him perhaps more formidable than any other foe to the society against which his efforts are directed.

‘Where is your good old cause?’ cried a bystander in derision as Harrison, the leader of the Fifth Monarchy Men, passed by on his way to the scaffold.

‘Here it is,’ replied the prisoner, laying, with a cheerful smile, his hand on his heart, ‘and I am going to seal it with my blood.’

Harrison was dying, so to speak, a failure. The Restoration had taken place; the representative of the monarchy he had hated and had helped to destroy was on the throne, the struggle in which his life had been spent had been apparently vain. Yet his spirit was unbroken, his courage as high as ever. Whatever might be the outward aspect of affairs, ultimate defeat, to those who had the Almighty God on their side, was a thing impossible. To such men there could be no temptation to make terms with the enemy.

Of those who fought in this spirit, this same Thomas Harrison may be accepted as representative. Soldier, regicide, and fanatic, carrying the principles of his party to their extremest limit, he was continually in revolt against the powers, by whatever name they might be called, who arrogated to themselves the prerogative belonging by right to Christ alone. As relentless in his opposition to



the Protectorate as to the Monarchy, 'No King but Jesus' was his war-cry, nor did he recognise the possibility of compromise.

Harrison was born in the year 1606. He has been called the son of a butcher, Sir Walter Scott, in particular, attributing to lessons learnt in the shambles the indifference to bloodshed displayed by him on the battlefield. The statement is inaccurate. His father, in point of fact, was a Staffordshire grazier, afterwards, it seems, a colonel in the army, and he himself had received a fair education, being indentured to an attorney at Clifford's Inn—one of that profession of lawyers who, with priests and kings, were included in the maledictions of the sect he afterwards joined.

Of the period of his legal apprenticeship no record remains, Clarendon simply observing—somewhat arbitrarily—that such a training was apt to incline young men to more pride than any other kind of breeding, and to dispose them to be pragmatical and insolent. It is therefore only from the time of the breaking out of war between King and Parliament that it becomes possible to trace his history. At that date, quitting the service of law, he transformed himself from a clerk into a cornet of horse in the rebel forces—a path of life, to judge by the sequel, for which he must have been better adapted than for the more peaceful profession selected for him by his father.

Thenceforth, 'by diligence and sobriety'—the account, being Clarendon's, may be credited with impartiality—he rose steadily to distinction. In

no long time he is said to have attracted the attention of Cromwell himself; who, finding him much addicted to prayer and preaching, and fit besides to be trusted in business of all kinds, advanced him rapidly in the service, admitting him further to relations of so confidential a nature that there were—to quote Clarendon once more—few with whom he communicated so freely.

Clarendon's testimony on this matter receives corroboration from a letter written by Harrison some eight years later to his chief, and marked by the affectionate familiarity of a friend.

'I know you love me,' he says, after offering an explanation of some seeming negligence, 'therefore are not apt to except.' 'Love and duty,' he says again, 'makes me presume'; proceeding, after a fashion summarily qualified by Sir Henry Ellis in his description of the document as 'a letter of cant,' to exhort the Commander-in-chief to resort to those spiritual weapons wherein alone the writer placed his confidence.

'I doubt not your success, but I think faith and prayer must be the chief engines. . . . There is more to be had in this poor simple way than even most saints expect. . . . The Almighty Father carry you in His very bosom and deliver you (if it be His will) from touching a very hair of any for whom Jesus hath bled. . . . Your Excellency's loving servant, while I breathe, Thomas Harrison.'

In the outward appearance of the Puritan soldier there seems to have been little to recall the lawyer's clerk. It is related by Anthony Wood, on the

authority of Herbert, Groom of the Chamber, that on an observer so unlikely to be prejudiced in his favour as the King himself, his bearing had produced a good impression. After a close inspection of the man to whom his custody had been temporarily intrusted, and who had been credited by Royalists with designs upon his life, Charles observed that 'he looked like a soldier and that his aspect was good, and found him not such an one as he was represented, and that having judgment in faces, if he had observed him so well before, he would not have harboured that ill opinion of him.'

The picture has been preserved of the subsequent interview between the captive and the future regicide. Charles, lodged for the night at Farnham on his way to Windsor, caught sight, as he stood before the fire in a large wainscotted room, of Harrison, and signed to him to approach, which he accordingly did 'with due reverence.' The King, taking him by the arm, drew him aside towards the window, keeping him for half an hour or more in discourse, and communicating to him amongst other things the murderous designs he had been believed to have harboured. Harrison, it would seem, reassured the prisoner upon this point, adding, however, the less satisfactory assertion that the law was 'equally obliging to great and small, and that justice had no respect of persons, which his Majesty finding affectedly spoken and to no good end went to his supper.'

The same judicial coldness is apparent in another recorded utterance of a somewhat later date, when,

questioned once more by Charles as to whether it was the intention of his enemies to put an end to him by foul means, the soldier made answer, 'We have no such thought,' adding, 'Yet the Lord hath reserved you for a public example of justice.'

Soon after this ambiguous reply Harrison explained his meaning more fully by affixing his signature to the King's death warrant.

There are—to continue the description of his outer man—incongruous touches in the appearance of the stern Puritan, as his picture is handed down to us. On the occasion when Charles formed the favourable opinion of him quoted above, he was gallantly mounted, with a velvet montier on his head, a new buff coat and a crimson silk scarf richly fringed; and Mrs. Hutchinson, who cherished no love for him, observes with the pardonable bitterness of a wife, that at some great function of State, having persuaded her husband and others to take their places in Parliament in plain black suits, he appeared himself 'in a scarlet coat and cloak both laden with gold and silver lace, and the coat so covered with clinquant that one scarcely could discern the ground.' 'This was part,' says the writer, 'of his weakness'; while she has the justice to add that 'the Lord at last lifted him above these poor earthly elevations.'

Baxter has criticisms to make of a different nature. Harrison, he allows, was 'a man of natural parts for affection and oratory; but he was not well seen in the principles of his religion'—of Baxter's religion would probably be a more

accurate description—‘and . . . also so far from humble thoughts of himself that it was his ruin.’

A more personal grievance on Baxter’s part seems to have been the refusal of the Fifth Monarchy leader to argue with him. ‘He would not dispute with me at all,’ he observes plaintively, which was certainly hard upon Baxter.

It was, it is true, a time when to dispute with all those with whom they were not in agreement on religious matters would have left men little time for other occupations. But Harrison, pushing as he did Puritan principles to their extremest limit of extravagance, was likely enough to be regarded with suspicion by those whom he outran. Bred up as an Independent, by the time that the Fifth Monarchy Men came into prominence, he occupied the position of leader of a body chiefly recruited from that section of Puritanism.

The special faith professed by this sect—never a large one, but of more importance than its numerical strength would seem to warrant—was, briefly, the expectation of the approaching and personal reign of Christ upon earth, to the confusion of those classes in particular, priests, kings, and lawyers, who should be found usurping His sovereignty. Under the visible Christ, the saints, possessing the earth, would rule and execute justice. Moreover, it was the office of the elect, until such time as the Lord Himself should appear, to prepare His way, not only by means of the sword of the Spirit, but by other more material weapons.

These tenets were the central doctrines of a faith characteristic, in a high degree, of the time. In its picturesque symbolism, its appeal to the senses and the imagination, the adherent of the new religion found a substitute for the outward elements of beauty of which Puritan worship had been so ruthlessly stripped; and in the dream he indulged of Christ's earthly kingdom, with all the accompaniments of splendour and magnificence with which he loved to clothe it, the Fifth Monarchy man built himself a spiritual refuge from the uncompromising bareness, the rigid simplicity, of his creed. Human nature is the same in all ages, nor is the imagination to be fettered by dogma. Confined in one direction, it will force an outlet in another, and the invisible pictures painted by the Puritan visionary on the white-washed walls of his meeting-house were as gorgeous in colouring as any he had defaced elsewhere.

Nor was there, in the prevailing condition of religious opinion, anything incredible in the visions he indulged. It was a time when men all the world over were expectantly awaiting marvels; when no portent was beyond belief; and miracles were not only possible but probable. The spiritual excitement charging the atmosphere was limited neither by country, race, nor creed. A few years later the entire Jewish community, scattered throughout the world, was thrilled by the tidings, sent from the East, of the appearance of the true Messiah; and men were hastening, with eager

and pathetic exultation, to throw themselves at the feet of the beautiful Hebrew impostor who was enacting the part of the promised Deliverer. From the battlefield of Edgehill it was averred, on what must have seemed like indisputable evidence, that phantom hosts had been seen night after night to meet and struggle for the mastery. In Scotland the arrival was reported of a strange and mysterious vessel, with cordage and sails of silk, manned by a crew speaking an unknown tongue. Any day might bring fresh wonders to pass; and if the special expectations of the Fifth Monarchists were not shared by the Puritan body at large, it was not because anything in their creed was too incredible for general acceptance.

Upon the first appearance of the sect of which Harrison became the most prominent member, its chief number of adherents were drawn from his own profession. Nor was this otherwise than natural, in view of the important part assigned to the soldier in hastening the anticipated culmination. Called to prepare the way of the Lord by the destruction of those who occupied His place, men fought as the emissaries of heaven, counting each soul they sent to its account a fresh passport to divine favour, and literally, as the Israelites of old, hewing their enemies to pieces before the Lord.

Harrison himself was not backward in this work. If South is to be credited—nor is there anything in the character of the Puritan to give the lie to the accusation—he was indeed ‘notable for having

killed several after quarter given them by others, using these words in the doing it, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully."

The story is not improbably true, as well as the account given by Hugh Peters of the storming of Basing House, where Harrison again played a conspicuous part. Seventy-four persons were, on this occasion, killed in or about the house, including a woman 'who by her ranting provoked our soldiers.' Major Cuffe, a notorious papist, was slain by Harrison himself—'that godly and gallant gentleman'; and Robinson, the player, also expiated by his death the jibes levelled by him at the Puritan army.

Whether or not all the charges brought against Harrison were well founded, he would probably have been at no pains to disavow the actions attributed to him. Intrusted as he conceived himself to be with the duty of removing whatever obstacles might delay the triumph of the visible Christ, human life, except in so far as its extinction might serve that supreme purpose, would have seemed of small importance. The singleness of the fanatic was his, together with that strength lying, as Mr. Goldwin Smith has pointed out, partly at least in the fact that the die of earthly destiny is thrown with the steady hand of one whose treasure is not here. No motives of compassion would have given him pause; nor is the picture of him sketched by Baxter, when the two stood side by side at Langport, that of a man likely to take much account of one life more or less lost on either side.



On that occasion, as he watched the Royalists fly, the preacher records that he heard him, 'with a loud voice, break forth into the praises of God . . . as if he had been in a rapture.'

All seemed for a time to point to the realisation of his dream. Wonders had already been accomplished. An ancient Monarchy had been abolished ; its representative judged, condemned, and put to death. An apostate Church had been thrown down ; and the success of the Puritan arms may well have seemed the earnest of still greater triumphs.

With Harrison personally all had likewise gone well. Despatched by Parliament to conduct the war in Ireland, he had received the thanks of the House for his services there. Risen to prominence in the army, he was the chosen confidant of the Commander-in-chief. Speedily as the paths of the two were to separate, Cromwell—already the chief power in the State—and his subordinate were working together on lines that must have had the fullest approbation of the latter : ' Every other day almost, more fasts or some such religious exercise was managed by Cromwell and Harrison, who mainly promoted the same proposals for a new Representative, in order to the personal reign of Christ.' The government was to be placed in the hands of the saints ; all prophecies were drawing towards fulfilment.

For the moment statesman and fanatic seemed at one. It may be that Cromwell was genuinely, if transiently, infected by the enthusiasm and the

heated imagination of his friend and brother in arms. It was, in any case, no time to emphasise their differences, religious and political. So long as the Long Parliament continued undissolved, Harrison, with the party he represented, was too important an auxiliary for Cromwell not to use all available means to propitiate him. So far, too, as practical action was concerned, their views regarding the body still nominally invested with the government of the country were in cordial agreement. To Cromwell it was an obstruction in the way of the settlement of the country on a stable basis. In the eyes of the Fifth Monarchy man, it represented the immediate obstacle blocking the way of Christ and deferring His personal reign. He was therefore not only ready, but eager, to lend his assistance in dislodging it from the position it occupied. Cromwell is said, indeed, to have complained of over-ardour on Harrison's part; and, while paying a tribute to the purity of his aims, to have added that 'from the impatience of his spirit he would not wait the Lord's time.'

Necessary as he may have felt it to dissemble for the time his true opinions, there can be no doubt as to Cromwell's genuine sentiments with regard to the sect led by his lieutenant. Eighteen months later, when the need for caution was at an end, they were made abundantly clear. Addressing Parliament as Lord Protector, he alluded in no uncertain terms to an error 'of more refined sort' than others with which he had been previously dealing. Many honest and sincere persons, he pro-

ceeded to say, belonging to God, had fallen into the mistaken notion of the Fifth Monarchy. After demonstrating the chimerical and illusory nature of their anticipations, he indicated the treatment proper to be accorded to those holding the doctrines he condemned. 'Of some have compassion,' he quoted, 'making a difference; others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire. I fear,' added the Lord Protector, 'they will give too often opportunity for this exercise.'

While, however, it is thus clear that Cromwell can have had scant sympathy with the extravagant and visionary expectations of those he used as instruments in the furtherance of his own designs, the outward harmony between himself and Harrison continued unbroken up to the time when Cromwell's *coup* was accomplished and Parliament ousted from its position. According to the account given by Harrison himself, it is true that the dissolution was not his own work, though 'afterwards he was glad the thing was done.' But it is impossible to doubt that the leading part assigned to him in the day's proceedings must have been much to his liking, from the moment when, pending the arrival upon the scene of his chief, he 'most sweetly and humbly desired' the members to lay aside the Bill calculated to frustrate Cromwell's plans, to the assistance he finally rendered the Speaker in leaving the chair.

The scene must have represented the high-water mark of the success of the cause—'the most glorious cause that ever was in the world,' to use

the description he gave on the day he lost his life for it—the triumph of which was the object of Harrison's life. The seat of government was empty, awaiting its divine occupant. Was the time come for Christ to fill it? The position, with its intensity of wonder and excitement, is difficult to realise at present. For once Harrison must have felt himself brought close to the fulfilment of his life's hope. Then the vision faded.

That day must have closed the period of his cordial co-operation with the man who was already virtually, and was soon to be avowedly, the head of the State. Less than a year after he had assisted in dislodging the Long Parliament from Westminster, he was in his own turn expelled from the body that had replaced it. Four days later the title of Protector was conferred upon Cromwell. The work achieved by the overthrow of the Monarchy was undone. Under a different name a usurper once more sat in the place appertaining by right to none but Christ. His reign was as far off as ever.

The blow must have been severe. The political liberties of Englishmen might be assured, the position of the country vindicated, law, order, and justice restored; but all this was as nothing to Harrison and his comrades, in comparison with the true object for which they had fought. The blood of the saints dead upon the battlefield, their own blood, had been shed merely to exchange one despotism for another.

In Harrison's own case the bitterness of the friend was added to the anger of the fanatic and the disappointment of the politician. He had trusted, and he had been deceived. He was not a man to forgive it. 'When I found those that were as the apple of my eye to turn aside I did loathe them,' he said, referring long after to the time when his own path and Cromwell's had diverged. No human respect would have induced him to temporise; and his opposition to the new condition of affairs was open and explicit. Called, with two other leaders of his party, before Cromwell, he frankly declined to pledge himself to maintain a neutral or quiescent attitude, and was in consequence directed to leave London and to remain confined to his house in Staffordshire.

His career was, in a sense, ended. Of the spirit of compromise he had none. With his own hand he had barred the gate to advancement, office, or employment. To a man of a different temper the rest of life would have been overshadowed by the gloom of failure. Setting aside the bearing of the situation on his future, it must have been clear to the eyes of any observer, however misted with enthusiasm, that the fulfilment of his dream was, at the least, indefinitely postponed. But men of his creed and spirit possessed a faith which nothing had power to destroy. It only shone forth more brightly as the darkness thickened. 'Immortal hope itself,' says Carlyle, speaking of this sect, 'is beautiful because it is steeped in sorrow, and foolish desire lies vanquished under its feet.'

Rogers, a foremost clerical member of the body, expressing his confidence in the ultimate confusion of his enemies, adds that 'this is the victorious, overturning, already triumphing faith of hundreds (blessed be Jehovah) besides John Rogers.'

Amongst those hundreds, we may be sure, Harrison was to be counted. His faith never faltered.

The Protector, it is clear, had no desire to deal harshly with his former comrade, confining himself first to admonitions 'not to persevere in those evil ways whose end is destruction.' In 1655 it was, however, found necessary, in consequence of serious danger apprehended from the malcontents, to use a certain amount of severity towards the disaffected. Harrison was accordingly at that time, with others of his persuasion, confined in Carisbrooke Castle, where it appears from the diary of his fellow-captive, the same Rogers already quoted, that though not altogether separated from their families, no over-indulgence was extended to the prisoners.

Harrison's own imprisonment lasted more than a year. It is then recorded by Rogers that 'under pretence' of his father's dangerous illness and the approaching confinement of his wife, it was arranged to remove him to his house at Highgate. The fact affords a fresh proof of a lingering kindness on the part of Cromwell. It was not, however, received gratefully. 'In great fear,' writes Rogers again, 'of the serpent's snares in this order,' and apprehensive besides 'lest his further liberty should be any entanglement to him,

or let to his inward joys, and prison experiences,' Harrison was inclined to refuse the proffered indulgence. He was also unwilling, he said, to turn his own house into a prison. At last, however, under protest, he was compelled to accept the modified degree of freedom thus forced upon him, and to transfer himself to Highgate.

Of the views entertained by his wife of her husband's reluctance to join her, there is no mention. Singularly little is indeed heard of his domestic relations. Men of his day had scanty leisure to indulge in family affection, and private interests were often called upon to make way for public. It was a time when those that had wives were forced to follow St. Paul's counsel and be as though they had none. 'Rather than to turn as many did that put their hands to this plough,' wrote Harrison later, 'I chose rather to be separated from wife and family than to have compliance with them.'

The boast is one of the only allusions to be found to the special form of sacrifice in question, and even such privation brought with it its own compensating satisfaction, if we are to judge from the description of the final parting with the wife he was to leave behind him. For on that supreme occasion his farewell of her was taken 'with great joy and cheerfulness, as he did use to do when going some journey or about some service for the Lord,' merely desiring those who loved him to show their affection by being loving and tender to his widow.

For the present, however, the two were re-united, and a glimpse of him in his home at Highgate is afforded by the account given by General Ludlow, an old comrade from whom he had parted company, of a visit he paid there.

Ludlow appears to have been anxious, as old friends sometimes show themselves, to wring from Harrison a recognition of his errors, beginning with the part he had taken in the dissolution of the Long Parliament. Had not subsequent events, he asked, convinced him of his mistake in thus assisting in the interruption of civil authority? Harrison, however, stoutly refused to own that he had been wrong.

‘Upon their heads be the guilt who have made a wrong use of it,’ he replied. ‘For my own part my heart was upright and sincere in the thing.’

One of the reasons, he added, and it was characteristic, which had led him to side with Cromwell, was because the latter pretended to own and favour a sort of men who acted from higher motives than those of civil liberty. To Harrison and his friends civil liberty, as any other temporal good, was but of secondary importance. And still his refrain was the old one—his confidence in the future unimpaired—‘the saints shall take the kingdom, and possess it.’

During the remainder of the Protectorate his history presents little of importance. He continued to fall from time to time under suspicion, and to suffer in consequence terms of imprisonment. At one of these times it is recorded in a contem-



porary newspaper, with a sneer, that he had himself rebaptized.

In point of fact he appears to have taken no personal part in the disturbances occurring especially during the last year of Cromwell's life—a quiescence attributed to failure of health and strength rather than to any want of will. To some such failure he made allusion on the scaffold when, observed at that supreme moment to tremble, he explained that the cause was to be found in much blood lost in the wars and many wounds, adding that he had suffered for twelve years from the weakness of nerves responsible for it.

With Cromwell's death and the subsequent events, it became clear that the Restoration was at hand and that those at any rate who had been personally involved in the execution of the King would do wisely to retire to a place of security. Harrison, however, was not a man to seek safety in flight, accounting, according to Ludlow, such an action equivalent to the desertion of the cause he had maintained. Ludlow's report is corroborated by Harrison's own statement.

'If I had been minded to run away,' he said, 'I might have had many opportunities. But being so clear in the thing I durst not turn my back nor step a foot out of the way by reason I had been engaged in the service of so glorious and great a God.' To the soldier of the Divine General flight would have seemed a shameful thing. For the rest, 'Sure am I,' said Ludlow, in spite of the differences of opinion existing between the two—

sure am I he was every way so qualified for the part he had in the following suffering that even his enemies were astonished and confounded.'

The end was not long deferred. One of the seven originally exempted from the Act of Indemnity, Harrison was the first to be arrested and to be arraigned at the Old Bailey as a regicide.

His bearing to the end was consistent with his life. He pleaded not guilty, justifying alike the sentence passed on Charles and the authority by which he had acted. He was not there, he said, to deny his conduct, but rather to bring it to light. The King's death had not been done in a corner. He had prayed night and day, and had received assurances of the justness of his acts; adding the expression of his confidence that ere long it would be known from heaven, for 'there was more of God than men were aware of.' His authority had been derived from Parliament, and to no lower court did he hold himself accountable.

The trial was a solemn farce. He had been condemned and his fate sealed beforehand. The Bench was eager to pass sentence, possibly in the greater haste to prove its vindictive loyalty by reason of the identification by the prisoner of several of his judges as having been in former days as zealous in 'the cause' as he himself. Its impatience was displayed not only in constant interruptions of his speech, but in the refusal of his reasonable demands.

Harrison requested that he might be granted

the assistance of counsel. It concerned, he said, all his countrymen.

‘Your countrymen,’ was the answer, ‘would cry out and shame you.’

‘May be so, my Lords,’ said the prisoner with dignity. ‘Some will, but I am sure others will not.’

Accused of having proposed to ‘blacken’ the King in the eyes of the country, he gave an explicit denial to the charge. ‘I would have abhorred,’ he added, ‘to have brought him to account had not the blood of Englishmen that had been shed——’

Again he was interrupted, in terms of vulgar abuse. He should be sent to Bedlam, he was told, until he came to the gallows. ‘He had the plague,’ declared one Edward Turner, ‘and should be avoided as a house infected.’

It was abundantly clear that the court had been assembled, not to try but to convict him; but in any case the verdict must have been the same. The haste with which it was given bore fresh witness to the impatience of the Bench; and the prisoner, asked according to custom whether he had anything to say, replied in the negative, since, he added, the court had already refused to hear what was fit for him to speak in his defence.

To the end his courage never failed. On being brought to Newgate he had sent his wife word that that day was to him as his wedding-day, and he continued to display the same unbroken spirit. When sentence was pronounced, he received it without flinching.

‘Whom men have judged, God doth not condemn,’ he said, ‘blessed be the name of the Lord’; repeating as he was led away from the court the same old refrain—he had no reason to be ashamed of his cause.

‘I cannot be in a better condition if I had the desire of my heart,’ he told those who inquired how it fared with him. ‘We must be willing to receive hard things from the hands of our Father, as well as easy things.’

He proved himself willing. His friends, indeed, judged him in haste to be gone, regarding as he did what was to befall him in the light of an answer to prayer, ‘For many a time,’ said he, ‘have I begged of the Lord that if He had any hard things, any reproachful work, or contemptible service to be done by His people, that I should be employed in it.’

He had not long to wait. At Charing Cross, on the 13th of November,—‘so that the King,’ says Ludlow, ‘might have the pleasure of the spectacle’—Thomas Harrison was hanged.

The first of the regicides to suffer the penalty of their deed, vast crowds, according to Burnet, flocked to witness the execution, ‘and all people were well pleased with the sight.’ The Bishop, however, adds cautiously that, as execution after execution followed, the odiousness of the crime thus punished grew to be ‘much flattened,’ and most of those who suffered dying with much firmness and show of piety, justifying all they had done, not without a seeming joy for their suffering

on that account, the King was advised not to proceed further.'

Reading the account of Harrison's death, and judging of others by it, it is easy to believe that the King's advisers were right.

'Tis a day of joy to my soul,' he said, and as the rope was adjusted he was heard to repeat Isaac's words, 'Father, here is the wood, but where is the sacrifice?' adding, 'If the Lord see good He can provide another sacrifice . . . but His Will be done. Death is not terrible to me; yea, it is no more than a rush. I have learnt to die long ago.'

Thus he met his end, with as fearless a bearing as that with which he had carried himself upon the battlefield, 'and looking,' says Pepys, who had gone with the rest to witness the execution, 'as cheerful as any man could do in that condition.'

It was characteristic of the prevailing atmosphere of that day that even death failed to be regarded as final. In the east, about the same time, a report was current that the dead Messiah, Sabatai Sevi, from whom so much had been hoped, would after a certain number of years reappear on earth; and amongst Fifth Monarchy Men a rumour was circulated to the effect that the leader taken from them was to rise once more, to judge his judges and to restore the kingdom of the saints. 'His wife,' says Pepys, 'do expect his coming again.'

# GEORGE WASHINGTON

1732-1799

A SUCCESSFUL revolutionist is an anomaly. Few of the brotherhood are fated, not only to carry their work through to a prosperous end, but to enjoy in person the fruits of their labours. To have earned in addition the approval of contemporaries and posterity alike, to have conciliated the good opinion of both friend and foe, is a height of good fortune not many men attain.

George Washington, however, may be said to have achieved this signal distinction. To a marked degree he was successful in all to which he set his hand. '*Qui a réussi comme lui ?*' asks M. Guizot. '*Qui a vu de si près, et si tôt, son propre succès ? Qui a joui à ce point, et jusqu'au bout, de la confiance et de la reconnaissance de son pays ? . . . De tous les grands hommes il a été le plus vertueux et le plus heureux.*'

His success was indeed phenomenal. Perhaps it was stranger still that the world forgave him for it. The unanimity of the admiration he excited is epitomised by the fact that, at the news of his death, the rival fleets of England and France, at war with one another at the time, are said to have hoisted signs of mourning. And if it is true that the noblest reputations do not commonly go un-

assailed, and the blame of the vulgar critic may almost be reckoned a necessary factor in the purest renown, it is nevertheless worth registering, to the credit of human nature, that in the case of the great American patriot the voice of the detractor has rarely, save during one comparatively short period, made itself heard.

It must be admitted that the devil's advocate would have had a difficult task had he been called upon to show cause why canonisation should not have been conferred by his countrymen upon this national saint. 'That I have foibles, and perhaps many of them,' said Washington himself, 'I shall not deny. I should esteem myself, as the world would, vain and empty, were I to arrogate perfection.' A confession of weaknesses is only to allow that he was human; that, so far as can be known, they were singularly few, all men are agreed. As man, as citizen, and as soldier, he stands out an unusually faultless figure. In a position where the absence of personal ambition came near to taking rank as a miracle, no trace of it is perceptible. If he was not free from the pride scarcely to be distinguished from self-respect, of vanity—that failing which, though not included in the list of deadly sins, has a trick of running any one of them hard in the matter of consequences—he had not a jot. The purity of his motives, his unblemished honour, his stainless rectitude, have never been seriously called in question. As citizen, the interests of his country invariably took precedence of his own. As soldier, he combined, with a gallantry which might have

been termed reckless, the more rare and difficult courage implied in carrying on campaign after campaign at the head of an army lacking in almost everything essential to success. Without this background of patient and dogged perseverance his feats of arms might have been nothing greater than the result of a splendid audacity. As it was, each one of them represented months of toil and suffering, and was the calculated triumph of a general. Taking him altogether, he occupies his place in history as blameless a figure as any there to be found.

The estimate deliberately recorded of him by a judge intimately and thoroughly acquainted with the man of whom he wrote is worth quoting. His mind, according to Jefferson, though not of the first order, was great and powerful, his penetration strong. So far as he saw, no judgment was sounder, though, being little assisted by imagination, he was slow in arriving at conclusions. Though incapable of fear, he was pre-eminently prudent. His integrity was absolute, his justice inflexible; nor was he ever biased by love, hate, or interest. In those cases where passion broke its bonds, he was tremendous in his wrath; but his temper, though naturally irritable, was controlled. With regard to money, he was honourable, but exact. 'His heart was not warm in its affections, but he exactly calculated every man's value, and gave him a solid esteem proportioned to it. . . . On the whole, his character was, in its mass, perfect, in nothing bad, in few points indifferent.'



The judgment, just, impartial, and unenthusiastic, represents fairly enough the impression produced by a study of his life. In spite of his many merits, it is apt to leave the reader cold. His virtues are written so that he who runs may, nay must, read; but it is ten to one that the recognition of them will fail to excite the imagination or stir the heart. Lesser, or worse, men have won a larger measure of love.

Casting about for a reason, over and above the very absence of those weaknesses of poor human nature which have something endearing about them, it is perhaps to be discovered in yet another of his gifts—the gift of silence. Simple, strong, and eminently practical, he went about his work with as few words as might be. Silence was with him no habit deliberately adopted; it was neither a policy nor a precaution; it was a necessity of his nature. And whilst such a habit may be the mark of a character no less rare than admirable, it is also the negative proof of the absence of a need of sympathy. What men want it may be taken as a general rule that they will demand. In Washington's case, not claiming sympathy, it is probable that, even in his own day, he did not fully obtain it. He had, doubtless, friends whom he loved and who returned his affection; but it is curious and significant that it seems to have taken him a lifetime to win—if indeed it was won in the end—the regard of one at least of those dearest to him. The story of his relations with the young West Indian adventurer, Hamilton, for whom he cherished so

deep an affection and who returned that affection so ill, whilst it has a touch of pathos investing Washington with a human interest he sometimes lacks, also points to a defect in his capacity for calling forth affection.<sup>1</sup>

Turning from his contemporaries to posterity, he has remained to it, so to speak, a stranger. Not a few men have become known to future generations after a more intimate fashion than can be possible during their lifetime to any save those admitted to the innermost circle of familiar association. In life they belonged to their friends; in death they became the property of the world. The grave unseals many secrets, and the stranger, rightly or not, is made the recipient of confidences that a man hesitates to intrust to his brother. The crowd enters the inner shrine and lifts the veil of the temple. The letter, or the diary, yesterday guarded jealously under lock and key, is to-morrow exposed to the scrutiny and the criticism of the inquisitive public. But Washington is not of these. We know the facts of his life, what he did, how he looked. We are aware of the dignity and self-restraint marking his attitude towards the world; and we catch more vivid glimpses of him reflected in the effect produced upon those with whom he was brought into contact—such as the soldiers serving under him, upon whom his personality

<sup>1</sup> It is noticeable that nothing of the kind is perceptible with regard to the young Lafayette. It is possible that the demonstrative love of the Frenchman for his 'adopted father' had broken down the barriers of reserve set up by nature in the American.

worked after a fashion dispensing with words. But here our knowledge stops short. There is no real and intimate acquaintanceship with the complex springs of action. No record of struggles and temptations brings him nearer to us; no tales of any secret falls, or of remorse, set him closer still. The voice of the man rarely, by a personal appeal, bridges the gulf time has opened. 'Of himself,' says a careful biographer, 'he said nothing.' And though it may be true that words are but a secondary means of self-revelation; or even, as, Gautier avers, that '*on ne parle que lorsqu'on n'a rien à dire*,' personal contact, the grasp of a hand, the glance of an eye, are necessary if a man is to make himself understood without the medium of language. In Washington's case, those utterances knitting together, in heart and sympathies, men who have never looked upon each other's faces, are rarely heard. His very strength, the qualities enabling him to stand alone and maintain his attitude of quiet independence, are so many sources of estrangement. Posterity honours and respects, but on the whole it does not greatly love him.

Different methods must be pursued to arrive at conclusions with regard to different men. Whilst one man must be judged pre-eminently by a study of motives, another must stand or fall by facts. In the case of Washington, in the absence of those impulses, conscious or unconscious, of self-revelation which occasionally give the key to a life, all that is available is, broadly speaking, the evidence furnished by facts—evidence unsatisfactory enough

as a general rule, since it is possible for men to work together hand in hand, to practise the same virtues and to fall into the like faults, and yet, in all that lends subjective and moral importance to outward action, to remain as far asunder as the limits of human nature will permit.

In the present instance, however, this data is less inconclusive than usual. So far as it is possible to judge, there was about George Washington so noble a simplicity, so complete an absence of any disguise or pose, that the task of deducing character from conduct becomes comparatively easy. '*C'est surtout la faiblesse des convictions,*' says Guizot again, '*qui fait celle des conduites.*' In Washington there was no such weakness. Neither, so far as can be guessed, was there any esoteric side to his social and political faith. His objects were avowed, and they corresponded with the means taken to attain them. The purpose he set before him—that of winning freedom and independence for his country—might indeed be difficult of achievement, an arduous task, but it was neither chimerical, nor, as the event proved, beyond the range of possibility. He was kindled by the hope of the patriot, not by the zeal of the fanatic. No visions of an earthly Paradise, to be struggled for at all hazards and at every cost, dazzled his sight. Eminently sane, the ideal he set before him was one not out of the reach of courage, perseverance, self-sacrifice and patience, and upon all these, so far as he himself was concerned, he could count. By means of these qualities the

American Revolution was accomplished. There has been no more striking instance of salvation won for a nation by a single man. The ultimate result would doubtless have been the same had Washington never lived; but, without him, the independence of the Colonies would probably have been indefinitely postponed. By Washington it was obtained in a comparatively short space of time and in the face of almost overwhelming obstacles. In July 1775 he accepted the command of the forces of the revolted states; in December 1781 his work was accomplished, and, 'commending the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God,' he rendered back his commission into the hands of those from whom he had received it. It is with the character of the man by whom the war was conducted rather than with the facts of the war that we are concerned, but those facts were, to an unusual degree, the result and outcome of character.

A letter to Congress may serve as an example of the spirit he displayed from first to last, whilst carrying on the struggle in the face of difficulties many men might have regarded as insuperable. Reduced at the time it was written to desperate straits, he had exceeded his powers and pledged his own estate, and ruin to the cause still remained within measurable distance. In a few brief sentences he placed the situation before the central authority, adding his reasons, and the apology, were one needed, for his conduct :

'A character to lose,' he wrote, 'an estate to

forfeit, the inestimable blessings of liberty at stake, and a life devoted, must be my excuse.'

It was seldom that Washington went so far in the direction of a personal explanation, and the words are a fair example of his proud and quiet independence. He spoke as only a man has a right to speak by whom nothing has been kept back.

His tone in the hour of victory is no less instructive. It was not that of the lover of war. His was not the restless ambition of the successful soldier. He had attained his end, and he was content. 'The scene is at last closed,' he wrote, 'I feel myself eased of a load of public care. I hope to spend the remainder of my days in cultivating the affections of good men, and in the practice of the domestic virtues.' The hope was not realised; the infant republic could not dispense with the services of the statesman to whom she owed her very existence. But that the words expressed his genuine aspirations there is no reason to doubt.

From these two quotations alone it would almost be possible to infer the character of the man. All that is known of his life, public and private, in peace and in war, is in harmony with them. 'George was always a good boy,' said his mother at a time when he had vindicated his right to be regarded as the greatest of his countrymen, adding her confidence that he would continue to do his duty. Whether in time of peace or war, he did it, and did it well.

Of his life antecedent to the great national struggle a brief account may suffice. Born in Virginia, in the position of a country gentleman, there was little to distinguish it from that led by his neighbours. Simple in tastes and habits, he might have seemed eminently adapted to live and die a planter. The work of a surveyor on the frontier had, however, accustomed him early to exposure and hardship, and in fighting the French, his future allies, he had served his apprenticeship to war. It was when scarcely more than a lad he wrote that he loved to hear the bullets whistle. It was a liking he never lost, in spite of his more mature disapproval of the boyish boast.

A feature belonging to this early initiation in war is worth noting in connection with his future career. It is his profound pity—a pity not always found in the soldier, especially in his youth—for human suffering. Washington, always slow to give expression to his feelings, must have been deeply moved, when, in the bitterness of his indignation at the insufficiency of the means placed at his disposal for affording protection to the unhappy inhabitants of the invaded country, he wrote that the tears of the women and the petitions of the men melted him into ‘such deadly sorrow that I solemnly declare, if I know my own mind, I could offer myself a willing sacrifice to the butchering enemy, provided that would contribute to the people’s ease.’

The value of an object is measured by the price paid for it. The man who wrote that letter was

not likely to throw himself lightly into a war of the magnitude of that he subsequently carried on, month after month, by means of an army denuded of almost every necessary of life, and tracked, in one instance at least, by the traces left by the bleeding feet of the soldiers.

The passing of the Stamp Act—the prelude to the coming storm, found him a member of the Virginian House of Burgesses, having resigned his commission on his marriage in order to lead the happy and unambitious life of a country gentleman. In this character Washington might have passed the remainder of his days had he not been forced by circumstances into action. It needed the actual call to the struggle before his fighting instincts, strong though they were, gained the mastery, and he became ready to sacrifice substance, happiness, life, all, in the cause of liberty.

His identification with that cause was marked by careful deliberation. If he was one of the first to detect a policy on the part of the Home Government which, carried out, must lead to separation, he had no desire that the colonies should proceed hastily to extremities. In defence of lawful liberty, in resistance to a tyrannical exercise of power, it was indeed his expressed conviction that 'no man should hesitate a moment to use arms.' Yet he added that arms should be the *dernier resort*.

To that last resource it was becoming clear that recourse must be had. In the opinion of some the proximate reasons of the war have appeared inadequate. But whether or not this was true,



the main issue remains unaffected. The reasons which drove the American people to revolt were not so much the injustice of this or that tax, the levying of one duty or another, as the assertion on the part of the mother country of fundamental rights disallowed by the colonies. The symptoms are not the disease, and the true sundering causes lay far below the surface agitation. To many dispassionate judges on this side of the water, as well as to the American nation itself, taxation of a people independently of its own consent was an unwarrantable infringement of lawful liberty. But had a compromise been effected, and had the Home Government displayed more wisdom and foresight than it did, though the crisis might have been postponed, it is scarcely conceivable that it should have been averted. Already in England there were not wanting thinkers who perceived that the malady had reached too advanced a stage to be arrested, and that severance alone was likely to prove an effectual remedy. At the same time even Adam Smith, while an advocate of this drastic cure, admitted that the solution would never be voluntarily adopted by any nation.

That an attempt was to be made to force it upon Great Britain was soon made plain. Yet, indignant as were the colonies at the arbitrary proceedings of the Home Government, the spirit of revolution was singularly slow in spreading, and the aspirations of the people continued for the most part to be limited to a return to their earlier conditions of government. Whatever might be the wider

principles underlying the struggle, the ostensible cause in which the nation was invited to take up arms was a financial quarrel. This should be borne in mind as supplying a key to the fashion in which it was carried on. It has been justly observed that a mere money dispute is not calculated to evoke enthusiasm or to transform the character, and that, in consequence, 'few of the great pages of history are less marked by the stamp of heroism than the American Revolution.' The fervour of the struggle for Italian independence, the passion for abstract principles of justice that fired the imagination of the French, the love of their native soil and the hatred of the oppressor characteristic of the Irish rebel, were all alike absent. In their stead was a rational desire for a reasonable measure of liberty, a prosaic and sane determination to resist robbery. Such a desire and such a determination were enough to make men arm; they were not enough to inspire them with a longing for the battle.

Washington was among the first to recognise the fact that war was inevitable. Satisfied that such was the case, his course was no half-hearted one, and addressing a meeting of Virginians, he declared himself ready to raise a thousand men, subsist them at his own cost, and march them to the relief of Boston, then in the hands of British troops. The combative spirit of the leader of the Revolution was roused at last.

By the spring of 1775 the northern colonists had fought, and fought well. In the south preparations

for the struggle were being strenuously pushed forward, although Congress, whilst exercising its own sovereign authority, continued to send 'humble and dutiful petitions' to the King. Elected a delegate, Washington silently watched its vacillations. If he abstained from taking part in the debate, it was a fact more expressive than verbal argument that he now appeared in his place wearing the uniform of a Virginian colonel.

Silent as he had remained, consistent as had been his refusal to assume a foremost place, or even to add his voice unnecessarily to those of the promoters of war, his power had made itself felt. 'If you speak of solid information or sound judgment,' said a contemporary observer, 'Colonel Washington is unquestionably the greatest man in the Congress.' He was also a tried and skilful soldier; of stainless character and unblemished honour. The place he held in public estimation was proved on June 15, 1775, when he was appointed by Congress Commander-in-chief of the American forces. On the following day he signified his acceptance of the post, declining however, on the grounds of insufficiency for the task before him, to receive any emoluments over and above the actual expenses he might incur in the service of the State.

What were his expectations of success can only be conjectured. To some men the chances of it must have seemed small. But Washington was confident that, given the power and will to fight, a nation struggling for freedom was destined to win

it. 'Did the militia fight?' was his question on receiving the news of the combat at Bunker's Hill. 'Then the liberties of the country are safe,' was his rejoinder, when answered in the affirmative. It was a confidence he never lost. We have it on his own authority that he had never been despondent; and at a time when a man might reasonably have considered the situation desperate he wrote to his brother that 'under a full persuasion of the justice of our cause, I cannot entertain the idea that it will finally sink.' It was no doubt this inextinguishable faith which enabled him to carry on the struggle under conditions making success seem, humanly speaking, almost impossible.

At Cambridge, near Boston, Washington formally opened the campaign by drawing his sword before the assembled troops.

A variety of circumstances contributed to add difficulty to his position. A Southerner, an aristocrat, a slave-owner, and an Episcopalian, he was surrounded by men identified with opposite opinions; democrats as regarded politics, dissenters as regarded religion. And whilst conciliation would have seemed imperatively demanded if he was to gain the good-will of those over whom he had been placed, there was no leisure to spend in the acquirement of popularity. Though enthusiastic and courageous, the troops were totally lacking in the discipline necessary to render an army efficient; the enemy was close at hand; and no time was to be lost in taking such measures as might best serve to reduce chaos to order.

Washington was not the man to flinch from his duty. 'I spare none,' he himself declared laconically, describing the necessity of dealing out summary justice to officers guilty of military offences. 'New lords, new laws,' wrote the army chaplain, with reference to the strictness of the discipline enforced. Yet such was the power of the Commander-in-chief, such the force of his personal influence, that in spite of the obstacles presented by alien race and by conflicting opinions, no murmurs of discontent disturbed the unanimous welcome accorded to him by the New England soldiers.

The material out of which his army was to be fashioned, though raw, was good. The northern yeomen, from whom it had been recruited, were ardent supporters of the national cause, accustomed to the use of firearms, and were a well-educated and intelligent class. But the mass of the troops were totally inexperienced in military matters, unused to the pressure of discipline, and, above all, they had enlisted only for short service.

The condition of the army as regarded munitions of war may be inferred from the statement that, not a month after Washington had taken command of it, the discovery was made that gunpowder was lacking, and that some nine rounds alone remained in the cartridge boxes. Out of an army thus unprovided, and constantly changing its constituent elements, the new Commander-in-chief was called upon to forge the instrument to be used in severing the connection of the colonies with England. The

magnitude of the work he accomplished can only be estimated aright when this is constantly borne in mind.

The siege of Boston lasted from July till the following spring. In March the end came. Howe with his troops evacuated the town, and it remained in the hands of the Americans. Great as was the triumph in itself, its moral effect was almost incalculable. The strength of the colonies had been measured against that of the mother country. Her regular and disciplined forces had been compelled to yield to an army of untested and uncertain calibre. Lord Sandwich's contemptuous assertion, made in the House of Lords, to the effect that all Yankees were cowards, had been explicitly disproved.

Another fact of no less importance had been also made clear. This was the mettle and quality of the man who had been selected as the leader in the fight. Washington had displayed, in this opening scene of the struggle, gifts and powers by which he continued to be distinguished to the end. He had not only shown himself to be a skilful general, but, though sorely tried by the jealousies, the insubordination, and the lack of the habit of obedience of the heterogeneous body of soldiers under his command, he had testified a remarkable capacity for handling men of different race and breeding to his own. What was scarcely less important, his attitude towards an enemy still invested with the glamour belonging, in the eyes of colonists, to the mother country, had been characterised by a dignity, a self-control, an

independence and a self-respect before which the studied insolence of the British military authorities had been at last forced to give way. American officers, when captured, had been dealt with as rebels, and therefore as felons. In a letter to General Gage, couched in language studiously moderate, Washington warned him that the treatment of British prisoners would for the future be regulated by that meted out to Americans. Upon receiving a reply stigmatising the colonists as rebels and criminals, not only did he act without delay upon his threat, but, in a second letter, read a lecture on manners to the English general. It must be confessed that in this composition a touch of the pedagogue is to be detected. Belonging as it did to the time, Washington was never quite free from the tendency. But it is certain that, whether or not General Gage was likely to take the lesson to heart, it was no less merited by him than the similar rebuke administered a little later on to Lord Howe. On this occasion, the British general, in attempting to open a correspondence with the Commander-in-chief of the American forces, had addressed him in the first place as 'Mr. Washington,' then as 'George Washington, Esq., etc. etc.,' and only upon finding that letters bearing those superscriptions were not received, wrote to England to say that it would be necessary to give Mr. Washington the title transforming the troops under his command from rebels into belligerents.

The success which had attended the opening

scenes of the war, in the face of overwhelming difficulties, was little short of a miracle. Washington's own description of the situation, applying as it does in a measure to the entire struggle for independence, is worth quoting. 'It is not in the page of history perhaps,' he wrote, 'to furnish a case like ours: to maintain a post within musket-shot of the enemy for six months together without powder, and at the same time to disband one army and recruit another within that distance of twenty odd British regiments.' 'My situation,' he wrote a month before the capitulation, 'has been such that I have been obliged to use art to conceal it from my own officers.'

If the astonishing incapacity of the British generals then and thereafter must be allowed to have contributed to the success of the American arms, it is no less certain that that success was mainly due to Washington and to his extraordinary powers of patient endurance, perseverance, and unflinching determination. By July 4, 1776, Congress, by its Declaration of Independence, had proclaimed to the world that the time for compromise was over. The Revolution was, in theory, an accomplished fact. But to the Commander-in-chief was to belong the glory of making that fact solid and substantial. Again and again, during the next five years, to a less gallant nature, a less obstinate faith, the game would have seemed desperate, and honourable submission the sole alternative. Excuses might have been found for accommodation with the British Government. All



that had been claimed by the colonies at the outset of the war had been practically conceded, and any remaining grievances would have been readily redressed. But the temper of the American people had changed. The Declaration of Independence was not likely to be retracted; the horizon had broadened, and men who had tasted of full political liberty were not disposed to retrace their steps. To Washington at least, such a course would seem never to have suggested itself. With a vacillating Congress interfering in military matters it was wholly incompetent to handle, appointing incapable officers, and demanding the impossible from the Commander-in-chief; with an army still enlisted on terms of short service, continually melting away and laboriously recruited from raw and untried material; with a perpetual insufficiency of both munitions of war and necessities of life; with calumny at work to lessen his own credit with the central authorities and the nation at large; with intrigues against him amongst his own officers, few men would not have experienced moments of discouragement if not of despair. But to Washington, so far as can be known, no such times came. To indulge a doubt as to the ultimate issue of the struggle would have seemed to him almost a want of confidence in the justice of God. Nor did his dogged determination ever fail. A story is told of how, at the very crisis of the war, the Delaware having been crossed on the way to Trenton, the troops were marching towards the town through a storm

of driving sleet, and a message was received by Washington from General Sullivan to the effect that the arms of the men were wet. 'Then tell your General,' was the reply, 'to use the bayonet, *for the town must be taken.*' The answer is typical of the spirit he displayed from first to last. If he met with mishaps, he was at once at work to retrieve them. His misfortunes were so many opportunities for the manifestation of an unbroken courage of a kind from which that of other men catches fire.

During the campaign of 1777 Washington's powers of resource were taxed to the uttermost in order to enable him, to use his own words, to keep the body and soul of his army together. The conduct of Congress too, the disparity between its demands and the means at his disposal for complying with those demands, was in itself enough to drive a Commander-in-chief to desperation. It was at this juncture, when endurance was already strained to its extremest limit and the pressure of anxiety was at its height, that the smouldering discontent and jealousy caused by his advancement gathered to a head and found expression in the cabal known by the name of General Conway, one of its chief promoters. The sordid intrigue can only be briefly noticed here; but the dignity and self-control of Washington's bearing on the occasion is too characteristic to be passed over in silence.

The nominal head of the party hostile to the Commander-in-chief was General Gates, who, as

commanding the northern army, occupied a position second alone to Washington's own. A vain and weak man, his head had been turned by the success of a campaign carefully planned by his chief himself, who had moreover materially contributed to it by detaching from the army under his immediate command troops he could ill spare. Not a particle of unworthy jealousy ever mingled with Washington's zeal. 'If the cause is advanced,' were his own words, borne out by deeds, 'indifferent is it to me where, or in what quarter, it happens.' Gates, on the contrary, the victory of Saratoga won, not only embarrassed the movements of Washington by the delays and obstacles he interposed in the way of the return of the southern troops, but, intoxicated by flattery, permitted himself to be placed in a position of rivalry with regard to his superior officer.

He had been made a tool of by men cleverer than himself. Those, in Congress and outside it, who desired to make use of him to Washington's detriment, had plied him with flattery, and had found none too coarse for his taste. 'You have saved our northern hemisphere,' wrote one of his sycophants, adding that, unless he came south, to 'collect the virtuous band who wished to fight under his banner,' all would be lost. The most active and adroit member of the intriguing party was, however, General Conway, an Irish adventurer whose path to unmerited advancement had been barred by the influence of the Commander-in-chief. Of the nature of the revenge he sought to

take an example is contained in a note, characteristically laconic, addressed to the culprit by Washington himself. 'Sir'—thus it runs—'a letter which I received last night contained the following paragraph: "In a letter from General Conway to General Gates he says, *Heaven has determined to save your country, or a weak general and bad counsellors would have ruined it.*" I am Sir, your humble servant, George Washington.'

Of the strength within Congress of the party opposed to the man occupied, in the sweat of his brow, in accomplishing the arduous task it had set him, proof is afforded by the fact that Conway was this same year appointed to be one of the two inspectors-general intrusted with the promotion of discipline and reform of abuses in the army. The rank of major-general was likewise conferred upon him. His importance was, however, ephemeral. The intrigues against the Commander-in-chief failed, and Gates was not invited to save the country by assuming the supreme command. But if America was too well aware of the value of her virtual head to deprive herself of his services, the affair must yet have added appreciably to his difficulties. A private letter written at this time will best show his own view of the matter. In this document, addressed to the President, Laurens, Washington admits that the knowledge that a malignant faction had been formed against him could not but cause him personal pain. His chief concern, however, arose from apprehension of the public danger arising from internal dissensions. 'My enemies,' he pursued,

'take an ungenerous advantage of me. They know the delicacy of my situation, and that motives of policy deprive me of the defence I might otherwise make against their insidious attacks. They know I cannot combat their insinuations, however injurious, without disclosing secrets which it is of the utmost moment to conceal'—the weakness of his forces, no doubt, and the total inadequacy of the means placed at his command. Lastly, the frank confession of fallibility is made the more generous when the charges preferred against him are remembered. Unremitting as his aim had been to further the common cause, yet 'I may very often have been mistaken in my judgment of the means, and may in many instances deserve the imputation of error.'

With this characteristic admission the affair of the Conway cabal may be dismissed. Another and perhaps a heavier blow inflicted on him, in the treason of one of his most trusted subordinates, is dealt with elsewhere. His treatment of the unfortunate André, as well as of Benedict Arnold himself, displays that sterner side of his character sometimes overlooked.

For another failing besides treason Washington had no indulgence. Lenient towards many shortcomings, magnanimous in dealing with personal affronts, a want of courage could win no forgiveness from him. 'It was from first to last impossible for him to understand how any man could refuse to fight or think of running away.'<sup>1</sup> Any trace of cowardice

<sup>1</sup> Lodge.

was one of the few causes with power to disturb the outward equability of a temper under firm control, and to disturb it to such a degree that General Scott, describing his conduct at the battle of Monmouth, records that the Commander-in-chief 'swore like an angel from heaven.' The scene between him and General Lee, the culprit on this occasion, may serve as an example of his bearing, brought face to face with this unpardonable sin.

Lee was a soldier of fortune, with a brilliant record. Fighting the French in earlier days, his ceaseless vigilance had earned for him from the Indians the *soubriquet* of 'the spirit that never sleeps.' He had served against Spain in Portugal; had risen to the rank of major-general in the Polish army; and, embracing the cause of American independence, had aspired to the supreme command. These having been his hopes, disappointed ambition may possibly have influenced his estimate of the military capacity of the man who had been preferred to him. At any rate it was a low one. 'Between ourselves,' he wrote to General Gates, the usual recipient of complaints against the Commander-in-chief, 'a certain great man is most damnably deficient'; and in his relations with Washington himself he strained obedience to the uttermost. He did worse. A prisoner in the British camp, he not only expressed his conviction that the game was near its end, but, justifying his conduct by the argument that since the colonies must eventually be forced to submit, it was for the advantage of both parties that the war

should be brought to a speedy conclusion, he occupied his enforced leisure in drawing up, for the benefit of the enemy, a plan for the conquest of America.

By the year 1778, having regained his liberty, he was once more fighting in the cause he had predoomed to failure; and, on the occasion of the evacuation of Philadelphia by the British forces, was in command of the advanced corps of the American troops, with explicit orders to attack the retiring enemy. To this policy he had been from the first opposed, urging that they should be allowed to withdraw unmolested; and though claiming the command due to his military rank, he had disobeyed, so far as disobedience was possible, the orders he had received. It was, he informed the indignant Lafayette, impossible to stand against British soldiers.

The result came near to producing a serious disaster. As the Commander-in-chief himself, with the main body of the troops, pushed forward to support the advanced corps, man after man met him with tales of defeat. At first angrily incredulous, when it became impossible to doubt the truth of the report, Washington rode on faster and faster through the scorching midday heat, until Lee himself, with the troops under his command, came in view, in full and disorderly retreat.

What passed is variously related. It would seem that, at that sight, Washington, riding straight up to Lee, demanded of him, with a deep oath, the meaning of what he saw; and that, met by faltering

excuses, he gave his indignation free vent. Then, setting himself to redeem the situation, he succeeded in retrieving the fortune of the day.

The scene was the end of Lee's employment as an American soldier. At first sentenced to a year's suspension, he was afterwards finally dismissed from the army, in consequence of an insolent note to Congress itself, and thus disappears from the struggle. It was probably better so. No merits, no experience, no gifts however brilliant, could blot out, in Washington's eyes, a refusal to fight.

It has been shown that Washington knew how to establish fitting relations between the newly born State and its enemies. In dealing with allies he was equally successful in vindicating the position of the colonies, and fixing their place, once for all, among the nations. Destitute of any spirit of self-assertion or arrogance, he was no less free from that servility sometimes displayed by the colonist towards the friendly European. While accepting, therefore, the French alliance with gratitude and cordiality, he systematically opposed the practice of bestowing posts upon Frenchmen to the detriment of native officers. The foreigner remained in his eyes a foreigner, to be treated with courtesy and consideration, but not to be preferred to men fighting in the cause of their own country. To his attitude on this question—a serious one at the time—part of the popularity he enjoyed in the army was doubtless due, a popularity especially important in the case of a commander-in-chief compelled to call upon his subordinates to face,



not danger alone, but every species of hardship and privation. It was mainly owing to the confidence he inspired that the army was kept together at all. His character, if not altogether calculated to call forth a supreme devotion, commanded an absolute trust. 'I will storm hell,' General Wayne is reported to have said when asked by his chief if he would undertake the attack of Stony Point; 'I will storm hell, if you will plan it.'

It was on December 4, 1781, that the closing scene of the militant portion of Washington's life took place. Independence had been won, and won chiefly by his own endurance, skill, and dogged perseverance. The British defeat was complete and final; the Revolution was accomplished and peace declared. The men who had fought side by side in the defence of a great cause were to part. When the officers of the army met together to take leave of their Commander-in-chief, even his iron self-control was shaken. As, lifting his glass, he pledged those present, his voice faltered.

The toast was drunk in silence. Then he spoke :

"I cannot come to each of you," he said, "and take my leave, but shall be obliged if you will come shake me by the hand."

'One by one they approached, and Washington grasped the hand of each man and embraced him. His eyes were full of tears, and he could not trust himself to speak. In silence he bade each and all farewell, and then, accompanied by his officers, walked to Whitehall Ferry. Entering his barge,

the word was given, and as the oars struck the water he stood up and lifted his hat.'<sup>1</sup>

In silence the salute was returned, and the parting was accomplished.

The Revolution was at an end, and Washington's career as revolutionist was over.

<sup>1</sup> Lodge's *Life*, vol. i. p. 337.

## BENEDICT ARNOLD

1741-1801

To every revolution its hero. To most, unfortunately, its traitor. If Washington, in regard to the struggle by which the independence of America was won, filled the place of the first, Benedict Arnold, of unenviable notoriety, was, *par excellence*, the last.

It is to the melancholy and dramatic close to his brilliant record that he owes his unique position amongst the *dramatis personæ* of the Revolution. The revolted colonies were served by other soldiers whose exploits and whose bravery equalled, if they could not excel, those of Arnold. In his treason he was, if not alone, at least pre-eminent—a giant among traitors.

There is little disposition at the present day to be hard upon sinners. They may even be said to have become the fashion. The harmless sheep is compelled, if he would win toleration, to twist his features into some semblance of the wolf; and it costs a man no trifling expenditure of moral courage to avow his complete respectability.

Coming to matters of historical interest, the same state of public feeling is discernible, and it

is not easy to discover the criminal who has not found his apologist.

Treachery, however, has an ugly sound about it, making men hesitate before they condone that special sin, and the traitor will wait longer than most for entire rehabilitation.

Nevertheless the claim put forward by Arnold's biographer, that whilst his crime is remembered—and it has been well remembered—by his countrymen, the recollection of his splendid services should not be altogether blotted out, is a fair one. It is precisely the combination of his merits—the conspicuous gallantry, the iron endurance, and the seeming patriotism of this Transatlantic Lucifer—with the sordid crime he committed, which make the figure of the man who did his best to wreck the national cause in America, and came so perilously near to success, a tragic and memorable one in history.

It would be ungenerous, indeed, to deny him his virtues. Yet another aspect of the question must not be overlooked. It is impossible to refuse recognition to the fact that there are actions which, when not the result of a momentary impulse of passion, but of mature and cool deliberation, must perforce be allowed to supply the key to much that would seem at first sight unconnected with them. The vine does not, after all, commonly bear thistles; nor does the true and convinced patriot take vengeance for personal injuries by a cold-blooded betrayal of his country. By so doing he betrays himself as well as his cause. It

is by the lurid light afforded by his treason that Arnold and his past must, in a measure at least, be interpreted.

In its startling contrasts and glaring colours his figure is conspicuous in the history of the war; prominent always whether in good—if indeed such qualities as his are to be ranked amongst the virtues—or in evil; violent, vindictive, proud, ambitious, and always brave, the fitting hero of the melodrama in which he was to play the principal part. Of his gallantry, his powers of endurance, his unflinching courage in the face of overwhelming difficulties, there can be no question. In generosity he was lavish. He was a staunch friend, and capable of devoted affection. But of his patriotism—read in the light of the catastrophe—it is impossible to speak with equal certainty. He fought, it is true, for the independence of his native land, and fought for it no man better. ‘The liberties of my country were in danger,’ he said himself at the trial by court-martial which must be considered one of the proximate causes of his treason. ‘The voice of my country called upon all her faithful sons to join in her defence. With cheerfulness I obeyed the call. I was one of the first in the field.’ There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of his adhesion to the national cause, proved and guaranteed by many sacrifices. But the convictions ranging him on the side of independence were, likely enough, a rough and ready set of opinions, adopted honestly enough, but without overmuch

reflection—a garment assumed at will, not one he had fashioned for himself. He was a soldier, not a politician. War was his natural element, fighting his delight; and it is pardonable to indulge a doubt whether the means were not to him, consciously or not, a more important matter than the end. A born soldier, the combat in itself would have offered to him the same irresistible attractions as the ring to the prize-fighter; he belonged to the brotherhood who in earlier ages were accustomed to take service wherever blows were to be dealt, without too curious an inquiry into the justice of the quarrel. The boy is father to the man. As a lad of fifteen his imagination had been so fired with the dream of a soldier's life that, not once, but twice, he had escaped from home with the purpose of joining the troops then engaged in the war with France. On the second occasion he had so far succeeded in carrying out his intention as to undergo some military discipline. Wearying, however, quickly of it, he returned shortly to his mother's house, a boy-deserter. The episode was a fitting prelude to his future life.

When the call to arm in the national cause went forth he responded to it, abandoning without hesitation the business of a successful merchant in order to fling himself, heart and soul, into the struggle; and sacrificing home, profession, leisure, to embrace a military career. Thenceforth, having taken his side, whether as serious patriot or as soldier of fortune, all his powers were devoted to

the endeavour to win for his cause, success, for himself, glory.

His story divides itself roughly into three parts. The first is concerned with a list of his remarkable achievements, of feats of arms reminding one of the exploits of a paladin of romance; the second, with the reward meted out to these services by the representatives of the people; the third contains the history of what must be termed his meditated revenge, the treason he deliberately planned and prepared, and would have executed without remorse had not his scheme been frustrated. With his failure to betray his post into the hands of the enemy, the story practically ends, the years succeeding that dramatic climax being, like the conclusion of an ill-constructed play, of no consequence to any one but the actor.

His value as a soldier was made apparent without delay. At no time were his great military gifts more signally displayed than during the abortive Canadian expedition undertaken soon after the beginning of hostilities. It was during that campaign that he laid the foundations of his reputation, winning from Washington himself, not prone to exaggeration, the tribute contained in the expression of his confidence that by Arnold everything would be done that valour or prudence could suggest.

From the high opinion thus early formed of him the Commander-in-chief never departed. Through good report and ill, he remained his staunch friend and supporter, doing all that in him

lay to counterbalance the effect of the conduct of the civil authorities, and never harbouring so much as a suspicion of his good faith, until the final catastrophe made clear to all the world the means taken by the injured man to compass his revenge.

If Washington was blind in his confidence there had been much to make him so. Arnold was not only a brilliant soldier but he possessed the scarcely less important gift of inspiring entire trust. In the march through the wilderness towards Quebec, such was his power of dealing with men that, while the troops under his command were in danger of dying of starvation, not a murmur was heard, nor did the possibility of the abandonment of the desperate enterprise appear to present itself to the minds of his raw recruits. When at last a retreat was found to be inevitable, it was acknowledged on all hands that the leader to whom the conduct of the expedition had been intrusted had done all that man could do to secure success. The final scene, with the touch of dramatic effect so often, whether intentionally or not, marking Arnold's performances, is sufficiently characteristic to be worth describing.

St. Johns had been reached by the retreating force, the pursuing enemy close behind. Arrived at the water's edge, Arnold watched the remnant of his troops embark. As the last boat-load quitted the shore, he mounted his horse, and accompanied by a single companion, rode back towards the advancing forces. Having made his



reconnaissance and satisfied himself as to the British strength, he turned his horse's head, only just in time, and galloped back to the lake. Then shooting the animal that had carried him, lest it should fall into hostile hands, he pushed off his boat, sprang into it, and followed his soldiers through the darkness of the night across the water.

The naval fight, taking place a little later in Valcour Bay, furnished another and a still more conspicuous example of Arnold's fashion of gathering laurels in the very act of suffering defeat. Set, on that occasion, with untried seamen and inexperienced gunners to defend a pass against overwhelming odds, he kept up the desperate fight for five hours, himself, in the absence of capable men, moving from gun to gun and pointing the pieces. Then, night having closed in, and the enemy's fleet being stationed across the channel to prevent escape, in the confident expectation of capturing the American vessels in the morning, he contrived, under cover of the darkness, to creep out through the enemy's lines with his crippled and shattered ships, and so to escape from the trap prepared for him. Nor was this all, for next morning, as the British followed in hot pursuit, Arnold, bringing up the rear of his disabled fleet, himself covered their retreat, kept the enemy in check, and received their concentrated fire, until at last, his sails in ribbons, his ship a wreck, but with his flag still flying and no thought of surrender, he broke through the enemy's vessels, drove his

ship ashore, set fire to her, and landing all his men, at length himself quitted the burning vessel and led his little band away in safety. It was a magnificent exploit, justifying the statement that the man who had performed it had covered himself with glory.

It is necessary to bear his feats of arms in mind if the conduct of Congress towards him is to be fully appreciated. The fame of his doings was in all men's mouths ; he was the hero of the day. It is almost incredible, and certainly incomprehensible, that he should have been selected as the object of repeated and deliberate slights. Yet so it was. In February 1777, some four months after the sea fight, five officers, every one of them his junior in military rank, were promoted over his head to be major-generals, his own name being omitted from the list. The surprise and indignation of Washington equalled his own. In the opinion of the Commander-in-chief, expressed privately to a member of Congress, 'a more active, a more spirited and sensible officer fills no department in your army.'

Arnold's first impulse, anticipated by Washington, was to resign his commission. That he did not carry out his intention was due to the influence of the Commander-in-chief, supplemented, one may pardonably suspect, by the conviction that life, with a fight going on from which he was excluded, would be but a pointless affair.

The conduct of Congress upon this occasion must be looked upon as the first link in the chain

ultimately leading to the final disaster. It was not likely to be forgotten by a proud and ambitious man. For the present, nevertheless, he consented to sink personal resentment in zeal for the national cause ; whilst Congress, with a tardiness depriving the act of all grace, rewarded fresh achievements by his promotion to the rank of major-general, hitherto withheld. At the close of the campaign ending in the capitulation of the British forces after the battle of Saratoga, his rightful position was restored to the successful soldier, but too late to efface the memory of the injustice previously endured.

Of that campaign Arnold had been the moving spirit, and to him its success was largely due. In this case, however, he had been again the victim of injustice, and the sense of injury which was driving him more and more into opposition to the American authorities must have been accentuated by the treatment he received. On this occasion he had not only to contend with the enemy in the field, but found himself thwarted at every point by the hostility and jealousy of his own superior officer. To such a degree was this jealousy carried, that at the moment when the battle of Saratoga was to be fought, and the issue of the campaign practically decided, he was deprived by General Gates, on a flimsy excuse, of any post in the army. Compelled to remain inactive, he listened, wild with the desire to be in the thick of the fight, to the sounds of battle audible in his quarters ; then, unable any longer to govern his

impatience, he broke his bounds and flung himself into the combat.

‘No man,’ he cried, ‘shall keep me in my tent to-day. If I am without command, I will fight in the ranks. But the soldiers, God bless them, will follow my lead. Come on! Victory or death.’

His confidence in the troops had not been misplaced. Whether or not in nominal authority, on the battlefield Arnold was supreme. Shouts of welcome greeted him as, on his great black horse, he rode amongst his men, and were audible above the tumult of the fight. From that moment he was the practical leader; nor was it till he had fallen to the ground, his horse shot under him, and he himself wounded and disabled, at the head of the troops he had led to victory, that he allowed himself to be overtaken by the messenger despatched by General Gates—himself never under fire during the day—to order him back.

One incident of the fight should be recorded, bearing witness as it does to a less prominent feature of Arnold’s character than his personal gallantry. When he had fallen, shot by a German private, one of his own men, eager to avenge him, had rushed forward to bayonet his assailant. Arnold, with the instinct of a true soldier, interposed. ‘Don’t hurt him,’ were his orders, ‘he did but his duty. He is a fine fellow,’ and the man’s life was saved.

That day Arnold reached the summit of his fame. ‘It was the hour,’ says some one, ‘for Benedict Arnold to have died.’ Death, however,

is not always ready to intervene at the point when it would seem to the looker-on desirable. The wound received on the field of battle, though severe, was unfortunately not mortal; and the soldier with whose praises the whole of America was ringing, survived to be the best and most justly hated man upon that continent.

The behaviour of the Government, if it cannot excuse, may be allowed to palliate his subsequent guilt. It would almost seem as if it had been deliberately planned to rouse a less resentful nature to bitterness. Taking the credit for the victory of Saratoga to himself, the elation of Gates was such that, forgetful alike of natural courtesy and military etiquette, he communicated the news of the success to Congress alone, leaving Washington himself, to whose carefully laid plans it was mainly due, to learn it as he might. It was he who appropriated the glory so little his by right, and 'Arnold's blood watered the laurels which now encircled the brow of Gates.' As if this were not sufficient, Congress, true to its traditions, though conceding to Arnold, in late reparation, his due priority in the army, performed what Washington characterised as an act of necessary justice without cordiality, and in no manner to allay the irritation caused by previous slights.

Worse was to follow. It was as if circumstances and men were leagued together to drive him towards the precipice whither he was tending. Even before this date charges involving an attack upon his personal integrity had been brought

against him, and certain proceedings at Montreal had been made the subject of inquiry. The verdict of the Board of War, confirmed by Congress, had declared his conduct to have been cruelly and groundlessly aspersed. But an acquittal does not, unfortunately, ensure oblivion; and it is likely that the accusations, though pronounced unfounded, had strengthened the hands of his many enemies. Nor was this all. Though cleared of the special charges preferred against him, the examination of his accounts dragged on. His expenditure during the Canadian expedition had no doubt been large. Army finances had been in confusion, and the commissariat arrangements so defective that the general in charge of the expedition had been called upon to undertake, in addition to his own, the duties properly belonging to quartermaster and commissary. A careful husbandry of means was no part of Arnold's military equipment. Lavish by nature, he had spent his private income freely for the benefit of the soldiers under his command, and he was not likely to have been less extravagant in the employment of public money. It is at any rate plain that dishonesty was never proved against him, and that Washington in particular, acquitted him of any such offence. But, nevertheless, the suspicion continued to be entertained in other quarters; and finding expression, now in coldness, now in secret hostility, must have been specially galling to a man of his proud spirit and impatient temper.

Washington proved himself, as usual, a loyal

supporter, giving, moreover, practical proof of his friendship. The severity of the wound received by Arnold at Saratoga had put an end, for the time, to any possibility of service in the field; and the Commander-in-chief, anxious no doubt at once to display his own confidence in one of the most brilliant of his officers, and to atone, so far as might be, for the treatment Arnold had received at the hands of Congress, conferred upon him the command of Philadelphia, upon its evacuation, in June 1778, by the British forces.

Arnold might have appeared in every respect well fitted for the post. Yet it was, as the event proved, an unfortunate appointment. It was during his tenure of office that those occurrences took place leading ultimately to the final catastrophe.

The first scene of this most dramatic episode might be laid at Philadelphia when, a month before the departure of the English garrison, a magnificent pageant took place, arranged by the British officers in honour of General Howe and his brother. This entertainment, called the *Mischianza*, has been invested with a melancholy interest by the tragic fate of some of those connected with it. The ill-starred André, later on Benedict Arnold's accomplice in his scheme of betrayal, was foremost in the organisation of the show, and a prominent figure in the tournament forming part of it; whilst amongst the ladies in whose honour lances were laid in rest was one, then little more than a beautiful child, whose doom was scarcely less melancholy. Not two years later André — young, handsome,

and gay, and with a personal attraction felt alike by friend and foe—had died upon the scaffold; and Peggy Shippen, as the wife of Benedict Arnold, was sharing the fate of a man ruined in character and reputation, a fugitive, dishonoured and disgraced, from the country he had striven to betray.

The Mischianza was one of the final incidents belonging to the British occupation of Philadelphia. A month later Howe, with his staff and troops, young André among them, had quitted the city, leaving it to be entered by the American forces. Not long after, the General by whom he had been replaced was falling as rapidly as might be under the influence of Miss Shippen.

Though a widower, Arnold was not more than thirty-six. He had clinging about him the glamour of a great military reputation, and of splendid services, ill requited by an ungrateful country. The circumstances and the man taken into account, it was little wonder that, in return for his own passionate affection, he should have succeeded in winning the heart of the eighteen-year-old girl. It was, at all events, quickly done. By the beginning of April 1779 he had made her his wife.

Such a marriage was, from one point of view, doubtless to be regretted. Philadelphia occupied at the time the position of the city of most importance in the States. It had also remained to a considerable extent loyalist in its sympathies, and not a few of its inhabitants would have seen cause for rejoicing in the failure of the attempt to win



independence. To the party in the city desiring an accommodation with the Home Government the Shippen family belonged. By means of his wife's connections, therefore, as well as by the general character of his present surroundings, Arnold found himself thrown into the society of those opposed, secretly or avowedly, to the American cause; and, embittered by personal ill-usage, he may likely enough have found a common ground of sympathy otherwise lacking in those who disliked, distrusted, and despised the new popular form of government. His conduct, at any rate, appears to have indicated that such was the fact, since one of the charges he was subsequently called upon to answer was that of opening his house to men of Tory and loyalist opinions, to the exclusion of those belonging to the national side. For the contemptuous rejoinder made by Arnold, to the effect that it sufficed him to contend with his enemies in the field, there is much to be said; but it cannot be denied that however desirable it may theoretically be to sink political differences in matters of social intercourse a too complete obliteration of party distinctions when it has become a question not merely of conflicting opinions, but of war to the death, may be a dangerous experiment. Nor was the General one of the opposing armies—at the moment in extreme danger and stress—altogether the proper person to try it.

Whilst his marriage, his environment, and the intangible but powerful influence exerted by atmosphere, may all have had their share in the further

undermining of Arnold's allegiance to the national cause, other forces were operating more strongly in the same direction. The tedious and protracted examination of the accounts he had presented had been at length concluded. Much confusion had been found to exist in them—not unnaturally, considering the circumstances under which they had been kept—and a large proportion of the claims he had advanced were disallowed.

The blow was severe. Not only did it furnish his enemies and detractors, in Congress and outside it, with a handle for an attack upon his character, but the loss of the money itself caused him serious embarrassment. Reckoning upon its payment, he had embarked, during his tenure of office in Philadelphia, upon a scale of living wholly disproportionate to the means at his command, and he now found himself at a loss where to turn for money to meet the expenses incurred.

The annoyance attending financial difficulties was inconsiderable in comparison with another blow shortly to be dealt him.

He was intensely unpopular in the important and influential state of Pennsylvania. It was not slow to give expression to its hostility. Early in the year 1779 the local executive council drew up a statement of its grievances, containing no less than eight distinct charges against General Arnold, and not only forwarded it to Congress, but caused it to be printed and sent forthwith to the several States of the Union.

Arnold's indignation was naturally unbounded,

Whilst some of the accusations were trivial and petty, others were of a serious character; and he was prompt in demanding a thorough investigation. Nevertheless, in spite of his impatience and his exasperation at the delay, it was not until close upon a year later, and after many complicated proceedings in Congress, that the court-martial finally appointed to inquire into the matter delivered its verdict. Arnold was then formally acquitted of all the grave charges brought against him, and in especial of any design of defrauding the public; the minor errors considered to have been proved being merely of the nature of irregularities. But in strange disproportion to the offence, and no doubt as a concession to the Pennsylvanian Council, he was sentenced to receive a reprimand from the Commander-in-chief—a punishment, to an officer of his standing and position, equivalent to disgrace.

Upon Washington, who had ever been his staunch and loyal ally, the sentence of the court must have laid a most distasteful duty. It is true that it was performed in a manner to convert, so far as was possible, the inevitable ‘reprimand’ into a tribute of praise. But the harm done was irretrievable. Congress had finally driven one of the most distinguished soldiers in the service of the nation into the ranks of the enemy.

The story of his actual treason remains to be told. It is one singularly and tragically complete. As to the degree of culpability involved in it opinions will probably differ, according as a long list of unmerited slights and injuries is allowed to

serve as an excuse, or on the contrary, by lending to his conduct the distinct and unmistakable stamp of a personal vengeance, is considered only to enhance his guilt. 'By heaven,' he once wrote to General Gates, in reference to the action of Congress in deliberately passing him over in the matter of promotion; 'by heaven, I am a villain if I seek not a brave revenge for injured honour.' The vengeance he now sought was neither brave nor was it adapted to apply a remedy to wounded honour!

The date when he first seriously entertained the idea of treason is uncertain. Uncertain also are the arguments he used to justify it to himself. But, conjecturably, they are not far to seek. A man, smarting under undeserved disgrace, sore and embittered, surrounded by those eager to turn his resentment to account; the wife he loved by birth and breeding a loyalist; vain and ambitious, and flattered by the dream of becoming the Monk of an American Restoration; with the conviction growing upon him, as such convictions are wont to do when affording excuses for actions already half decided on, of the hopelessness of the struggle for independence—all these reasons may have had their share in determining him. But it is impossible, even when allowing them due weight, to doubt that the desire for revenge induced him first to harbour the idea of treachery, and ultimately turned the scale in its favour.

No man honestly suffering a change of opinion is to be blamed for acting upon it. Such a course

may be a conspicuous proof of moral courage and honesty. But to abandon a cause is one thing, to betray it quite another ; and for the last there can be no excuse. The means are not justified by the end, however praiseworthy the end may be.

To return to the melancholy history, it appears certain that, for several months before the verdict of the court-martial was pronounced, Arnold had kept up a private correspondence with Major André, the same young English officer who, with Mrs. Arnold, had taken a leading part in the pageant of the *Mischianza*, and who was now Adjutant-General to Sir Henry Clinton. The correspondence may have begun merely as an exchange of friendly feeling between André and the husband of his old acquaintance. It seems clear that, even after his disgrace, Arnold was committed to no definite plan of treasonable action, since so late as March 1780 he desired to lead an expedition against the enemy. But his schemes must have been maturing during the spring and summer, and there can be little doubt that he had determined upon their execution when he asked and obtained from Washington the command of West Point, the most important military station of the colonies, and containing large storage of munitions of war. It was this post that he finally pledged himself to betray to the enemy.

Before he took up his residence at his new command a meeting took place between himself and Washington, significant of much—of absolute confidence and a generous desire of atonement for

the fault of others on the part of the Commander-in-chief, and of meditated betrayal on that of his subordinate. It was when the troops were crossing the river Hudson at King's Ferry that the two met, and that Arnold made inquiry as to whether a place had been assigned him in the approaching campaign. The answer was in the affirmative.

'Yes,' replied Washington, 'you are to command the west wing—the post of honour,' thus redeeming the pledge contained in his nominal reprimand that the man upon whom he had been compelled to bestow it should lack no opportunity of winning fresh distinction.

It is not difficult to imagine how Arnold's old fighting spirit must have stirred within him at the prompt response—his fighting spirit, and something better, for surely loyalty to the leader of what he had brought himself to regard as a forlorn hope cannot have been wholly extinguished. His face changed, it is said, and he remained silent; revolving, it may be, in his mind the possibility of even now at the eleventh hour retracing his steps. If so, however, he was not long in recognising the fact that he had gone too far to draw back; for shortly after, on the score of his wound, he declared himself still unfit for active service, and renewed his request to be placed in charge of West Point. Washington yielded to his wish, and Arnold obtained the post he desired.

Establishing himself at Robinson House, situated east of the Hudson and below a wooded hill, he was often to be seen walking alone by the river,

stern and sorrowful, as well, he might be, while he planned how he might best carry out his intention and deliver over to the enemy the charge with which he was intrusted.

His wife and child had joined him and all seemed well. Thus the summer passed into autumn, and the final catastrophe drew near. On the 18th of September an entertainment was given by a Colonel Williams, at his quarters in New York, to Sir Henry Clinton, the British General, and his staff. Amongst the guests was Major André, for whom Clinton, like most of those brought into contact with him, seems to have cherished a special affection. For the last time the young man that evening took his share in providing entertainment for the party, singing General Wolfe's song—then very popular. He was doubtless in high spirits, and looking forward with interest and excitement to an adventure upon which he was to start the following day. The negotiations between the British camp and Arnold had reached a stage demanding a personal interview; and André, as go-between, was to be taken by the sloop *Vulture* to meet the American General.

So deep has been the interest excited by the episode terminating in the death of André and the flight of Arnold, that every incident concerning the following days has been carefully preserved. It would be almost possible, were such details relevant in this place, to track the light-hearted envoy hour by hour as he went to meet his fate.

It is noticeable that though those by whom the story was told were one and all partisans of the cause which it was his object to bring to ruin, so great was the sympathy he inspired, the curious, incalculable effect of personal charm, that, conspirator as he was, and at least technically a spy, little but compassion and something like admiration seems to have been felt for him.

That his death was mainly due to his own rashness is clear. Clinton's orders, in despatching him on his perilous enterprise, had been precise. He was not to cross the enemy's lines, nor to put off his uniform, nor to become the bearer of any written document. Every one of these injunctions was disregarded in turn, to the young emissary's ruin.

On the night of September 21, Arnold and André met, hidden amongst a group of fir-trees. The interview took place without witnesses, nor is it known what passed between them during the hours that they remained in conference. When dawn was at hand, a horse was brought for André, and the two rode together through the American lines, the sentry's challenge being the first intimation received by the Englishman that he had unwittingly disobeyed Clinton's orders. It was then too late to draw back. He breakfasted at a house where Arnold left him, everything having been satisfactorily arranged. The scheme of treason was complete. Not West Point alone was to be delivered into the hands of the enemy, but the person of Washington himself—the friend who



had been unfalteringly true to him—was included in Arnold's plan of betrayal.

So far all had gone well with the conspirators. That night, under cover of the darkness, André was to regain the *Vulture*, the bearer, once more in disobedience to Clinton's instructions, of papers intrusted to him by Arnold, carried concealed in his boots.

The first serious misadventure occurred at this stage of the proceedings. The English sloop had attracted unwelcome attention, and shots fired at her by American cannon had forced her to shift her position and to retire. It was no longer possible for André to rejoin the vessel; and, relinquishing the intention, it became necessary for him to make an attempt to reach New York by land. Under these circumstances he committed his third fatal error, in changing his uniform for civilian clothes.

Notwithstanding his perilous position, he set out in good spirits, justified at first by success. Though not permitted to proceed unchallenged, it appeared for a time that the pass with which, under the name of Anderson, he had been provided by Arnold, would ensure his safety. At length, however, the suspicions of a party of scouts, more wary than the rest, were aroused, the more so as, at first mistaking the nationality of his challengers, he had openly avowed his own.

Even at this point he seems to have entertained little fear as to the result.

'God bless my soul,' he exclaimed cheerfully,

in explanation of his previous claim to be an Englishman, and now producing the pass signed by Arnold, 'a body must do anything to get along nowadays.'

Had the paper been displayed in the first instance, it would probably have saved him; but the men's misgivings had been too fully awakened to be wholly dispelled by the sight of the signature of their commanding officer. They insisted, therefore, upon searching the prisoner, when the documents concealed in his boots were discovered, and there could be no further question as to the nature of the prize they had secured.

'My God, he is a spy!' exclaimed the leader of the band, as the meaning of the incriminating papers, with the information they were intended to convey, became plain to him.

Then, for the first time, André would seem to have grasped the nature of the situation and his own danger. For a moment his brave spirit failed.

'I would to God,' he said, as his captors led him away; 'I would to God you had blown my brains out when you stopped me.'

A last gleam of hope followed. Handed over by the men who had taken him prisoner to a certain Colonel Jameson, it was arranged by the Colonel—apparently a thick-headed gentleman—that the captive, in the character of the Mr. Anderson whose pass bore Arnold's signature, should be despatched under a guard, and together with an explanatory letter, to the quarters of the General

himself. The plan, carried into effect, would, of course, have been André's salvation. But, upon the urgent remonstrance of a brother officer, Jameson yielded so far as to consent to send a messenger off in hot haste to overtake the party already, with André in charge, on their way to West Point, with orders to bring the prisoner back. This was accordingly done, Jameson still persisting in his determination to forward the written report of the occurrence to the General.

To Jameson's obstinacy Arnold owed his own life. But the fate of his accomplice was sealed. He was sent under a guard to Colonel Sheldon's headquarters, the damning documents found upon him having already been forwarded to the Commander-in-chief himself. His last chance was gone.

Meanwhile, the plot elaborated by the conspirators in their midnight conference would probably in any case have been frustrated. The arrangements then made had been based upon the expected presence of Washington at West Point two days later, when the person of the Commander-in-chief, as well as the military post, was to have been betrayed into the hands of the enemy. Washington's plans, however, had been unexpectedly altered, and on the morning of the 25th, a couple of days earlier than had been anticipated, a message was received at Robinson House to the effect that the Commander-in-chief was on his way thither, and might be expected to arrive in time for breakfast.

By reason of this change of plan, the papers found upon André had not yet come into Washington's hands. As he rode that autumn morning towards Arnold's headquarters, he was wholly without suspicion of the true state of affairs. It was still very early, and before proceeding to his destination he turned aside to inspect some defences, calling forth a remonstrance from Lafayette, who suggested that Mrs. Arnold would be waiting breakfast for her expected visitors.

'Ah, Marquis,' returned his chief lightly, 'you young men are all in love with Mrs. Arnold. I see you are eager to be with her as soon as possible.'

He was not, however, to be diverted from his purpose, and in the end it was arranged that Hamilton, his *aide*, should ride on, with others of his staff, to desire that breakfast should be proceeded with, Washington, with Lafayette, remaining behind to carry out the proposed inspection.

The record of that meal remains. Mrs. Arnold, as hostess, presided at it, light-hearted and gay, unconscious of the blow awaiting her. Arnold, as was natural enough, was grave and thoughtful. Before breakfast was concluded, a horseman rode up to the house. He was the bearer of Jameson's letter announcing to the General the capture of 'Anderson.'

To Arnold the news did not only convey the intimation of the failure of the plot it had cost so much to prepare, already endangered by Washington's movements. It was, besides, the

announcement of his own immediate and pressing peril.

Whatever were his faults, he had never been a coward. His courage did not fail him now. As cool as on the battlefield, though threatened with a worse fate than any he had confronted there, he rose from the table, made his excuses, went out to order his horse to be saddled; then, sending for his wife, he told her of the necessity for his instant flight. She fell to the ground in a dead faint. Laying her on her bed, Arnold summoned a servant before, returning to his guests, he explained that he was called away to make preparations at West Point for the reception of the Commander-in-chief. Then, galloping down a steep path, still known by his name, he gained the landing-place where his barge lay moored. A few minutes more and, his pistols ready for use in case of pursuit and a white handkerchief raised, he was being rowed swiftly, by oarsmen even then ignorant of the truth, towards the *Vulture*. The English vessel was reached, the traitor was received on board, and was safe from the vengeance of those he had left behind him.

Upon Washington the news of his treachery fell like a thunderbolt. As soldier and as friend, the blow was a crushing one. 'Whom can we trust now?' he is reported to have cried; whilst, according to another account, placing the proofs of the treason in the hands of Lafayette, the man perhaps of all those around him who loved him best, he said, with tears in his eyes, 'Arnold is a traitor,

and has fled to the British.' 'Treachery is all around me,' he said some days later to the officer charged with the custody of André, 'I hardly know whom to trust.' The words point to one of the most melancholy effects of a great betrayal. A blow is dealt at men's faith in the common humanity from which it is difficult to recover.

Arnold was safe ; but the doom of his less blame-worthy accomplice was sealed. Tried by court-martial, André was convicted, and sentenced to suffer death as a spy. Captured within the American lines, in the clothes of a civilian, and with the written evidence of the meaning of his presence there upon him, it could hardly have been otherwise. No efforts of Sir Henry Clinton, however strenuous, availed to save him from his fate ; nor did Washington—a more doubtful question of right and wrong—accede to his own petition that he might at least die a soldier's death. He met his doom with manliness and dignity, avowing no consciousness of guilt in the fashion after which he had attempted to serve his country. On October 2 he died by the gallows, his bearing to the end that of a gallant soldier and a gentleman. On his way to the place of execution, 'pale as death, but tranquil and calm,' he praised the discipline of the troops and observed upon the excellence of the military music.

On the part of his foes it should be noted, to the honour of human nature, that as the American soldiers watched the young man who had, with their own General, plotted the ruin of their cause, all

ranks alike are said to have been pervaded by melancholy and gloom.

Standing upon his coffin, his hands on his hips, André deliberately surveyed the crowd assembled to see him die.

'I have nothing more to say, gentlemen,' he answered in clear, unfaltering tones to the usual question, 'but this. I pray you to bear witness that I meet my fate like a brave man.'

The executioner did his duty, and all was over. A great silence prevailed. 'The chambers of death were never stiller.' André, guilty or guiltless, was gone to his account.

André had paid the death penalty. Arnold's punishment was to be a different one. Whether or not it was in the long-run harder to bear there is no evidence, or little of it, to show. It is reported that he made the suggestion that André's life should be purchased by the surrender of his own. It is certain that neither would Clinton have acted upon the suggestion, nor would André have consented to profit by it. But for Arnold's own sake it is to be wished that the story may be true.

He was not slow to offer his justification to the world for his conduct in leaving the 'rebel army.' In a proclamation issued to the American people, as well as in a second addressed to the troops, he attempted not only to make his own apology, but to induce others to follow his example. He had fought, he declared, for much less than the parent country was now willing to grant. Concessions

had removed every grievance that had afforded a reason for taking up arms, and he had returned to loyalty to the British monarchy. Such was his explanation and his plea.

His argument is beside the question. To a change of front it has been said that no blame need necessarily attach. No man can claim infallibility, nor is there anything but cowardice in continuing to act upon opinions no longer honestly held. When the service to be performed would be merely the empty expression of a faith which has suffered dissolution, it is the sincerer part to withdraw from the fight. A deliberate betrayal of trust is another matter. For it his countrymen could admit no justification; nor, in the long-run, could the nation in whose interest the treason was planned.

The end of his career can be briefly told. In December 1781, after having served under the British flag on various occasions, and in particular, having led an expedition against his own native State, Arnold left for England. Liable, should he fall into American hands, to receive the treatment due to a traitor and a deserter, he was an anxiety to the military authorities; and though thanked by Clinton for his services, it was not considered desirable that he should longer incur the risk of remaining in America.

In England he was received at Court with open arms. By a section of the British public he was likewise treated with cordiality and consideration. A sum of money was presented to him, and pensions



were bestowed upon his wife and children. To this means of living he added by engaging in mercantile enterprises. His wife remained to the end devotedly attached to him, and children grew up around them.

Yet, in spite of such alleviations of his lot, it must have been a bitter one. To a man of Arnold's temper there would have been something deathly about the calm following on the fierce excitement of the last few years. He was, besides, a stranger amongst strangers. Nor, in spite of royal favour, was the stigma attached by his treason to his name ever removed. Slights and indignities, equally difficult to endure or openly to resent, testified constantly to the place to which he had fallen in the estimation of men.

Had he, indeed, been permitted to pursue a soldier's calling, it is possible that, by services rendered to the country of his adoption, he might have partially obliterated the recollection of his past history. But in spite of his eager desire to find himself once more under arms, he was never able to succeed in obtaining military employment. More than one reason contributed to his exclusion. As a colonist, it would have been difficult, amongst men to whom his nationality was cause for contempt, to bestow upon him the position due to his military rank, confirmed by Clinton; while any distinction granted to a man who owed his notoriety chiefly to his treason would have been resented, not only by the entire Whig party, but by a section of their opponents.

Arnold was as silent as he was proud. In what spirit he received the reiterated refusal of his proffered services it is only possible to guess. But a single utterance gives the key to much.

'They will not give me a chance to seek a soldier's death,' he once said bitterly to his wife, returning from a vain application at the War Office. He was right. To the traitor no opportunity was to be granted, seek it as he might, of washing out the stain upon his honour.

Of how he himself, in the secret tribunal within—the court of final appeal from the world's verdict—regarded that stain, few indications remain to show. Some men make their confessions in public; others, if at all, where none can overhear them. 'Of that impure passion of remorse,' says Stevenson of another, 'he never breathed a syllable.' Arnold too kept silence. But in the change he made in the motto on his seal, his biographer, not too fancifully, detects a sign of that to which he gave no other expression. '*Mihi gloria sursum*,' the words had once run. But in later days they were altered, and read, '*Nil Desperandum*.'

Refused a soldier's work, his restless spirit sought excitement in other directions, in privateering enterprises and hazardous adventures. It was not until the year 1801 that the end came.

A story preserved by tradition concerning his deathbed, if authentic, furnishes another clue to that inward tragedy he never revealed in words. As he lay dying, his wandering imagination set him upon the battlefields where his laurels

had been won. Calling for the old uniform worn on the memorable morning of his flight, he demanded, besides, the epaulettes and sword knots presented to him by Washington at the height of his fame.

‘Let me die in my old American uniform,’ he desired—‘the uniform in which I fought my battles.’ And report says that he added, ‘God forgive me for ever putting on any other.’

On a tombstone at Milan the history of the dead lying below is epitomised in a single line:—

*‘Qui nunquam quievit, quiescit. Tace.’*

‘Never quiet before, he is quiet now. Silence.’ Lest the restless spirit wake and the restless brain begin once more to work. Surely the secret of that dead man, in those few words, is told.

It might be the history of Benedict Arnold.

## LOUIS ANTOINE DE SAINT-JUST

1767-1794

‘GOD sometimes sends a famine, sometimes a pestilence, and sometimes a hero, for the chastisement of mankind.’ So says Landor by the mouth of one of his characters. If ever the saying was true, it was true in the case of Saint-Just.

There is an order of men to whom too scanty a measure of pity has perhaps been accorded. It is that class who, to their own immense detriment, have been, so to speak, called to be criminals; or to give another description of the unfortunate vocation, have conceived themselves bound, in the vindication of some higher law, to set at defiance that code of morality to which mankind at large has subscribed.

The question how far it is permissible for a single individual to place his judgment in active and practical opposition to that of the majority of his fellow-citizens is a difficult one. But it is undeniable that men exist to whom their personal conscience represents the sole possible moral arbiter; and that such men—conscience not being an infallible guide—have been at times driven by its dictates to become, in the ordinary sense of the term, criminals.

If the world has little indulgence to spare for

these outlaws of society, it is doubtless, in its own interests, right. It is only when, from a present danger, they become by the lapse of years a feature of history that they can hope for justice, nor is it even then assured to them. For the apportionment of guilt is a more arbitrary affair than is commonly supposed, and the average mind less free from prejudice. Thus, though it cannot be denied that more innocent blood—a hundred times—is shed by the soldier than by the executioner, the refusal of a man to sit at table with a successful general would almost be held to furnish evidence justifying his relegation to a lunatic asylum, whilst there are probably scarcely a dozen amongst us who would feel disposed to send the common hangman an invitation to dinner. Furthermore, it is ten to one that in the very person obeying the dictates of a solitary conscience scruples will make themselves felt. The moral law of the majority has a binding, and no doubt in the main, a salutary force, taking a saint, a fanatic, or a hardened sinner to disregard it, and to decide to which of these classes a man belongs is not always an easy matter.

*'Rien ne ressemble à la vertu comme un grand crime,'* said Saint-Just, and he might have added that the converse sometimes holds equally good.

Saint-Just himself is one of the enigmas as yet unsolved by history. What is the key to the riddle he presents? Was he the wholesale assassin, thirsting for blood, that his enemies have represented him, or was he rather a zealot, weighing

human life—his own no less than that of others—as nothing in the balance compared with the advancement of his cause? Studying his life dispassionately it would seem that this last is the more likely explanation of the problem it presents. There are men who start on the search for truth with expectations by which all their discoveries are coloured. ‘As for monsters,’ says More in his *Utopia*, ‘because they be no news, of them we were nothing inquisitive,’ and if it is taken for granted that such portents are of daily occurrence, an easy explanation is at hand for any anomaly to be found in human nature. But monsters, after all, are the exceptions, and examining Saint-Just’s history in the light of the written evidence of character he has left behind him, it is not easy to include him amongst such phenomena; whilst, on the other hand, all evidence goes to prove him the very type of the enthusiast who sacrifices everything to an idea. Provided liberty remained—they are his own words, and in them one discerns at once the voice of the fanatic—what matter if vanity after vanity should be brought to the scaffold, to the grave, to nothingness? Circumstances present difficulties to those alone who fear death. ‘*Mourir n’est rien, pourvu que la Révolution triomphe!*’ Whilst more significant still, perhaps, is his avowal that ‘*il y a quelque chose de terrible dans l’amour de la patrie. Il est tellement exclusif qu’il immole tout, sans pitié, sans frayeur, sans respect humain, à l’intérêt public.*’

This was his confession of faith. The question

of its genuineness, of course, remains; nor can it be denied that there are men capable of employing such language as a veil and a disguise. But Saint-Just has rarely been charged with playing the hypocrite, and the absence of dissimulation has been admitted, even by an opponent, to be one of his negative virtues. 'Too proud to wish to seem other than he was,' says M. Fleury, 'he heaped crime upon crime with a terrible sincerity.'

The likelihood would seem to be that, fascinated—to use once more the language of an enemy—by the mirage of a phantasmal city where Providence and goodness should reign supreme, and peace and justice should be crowned, he pressed towards that goal, reckless of the sea of blood through which it was to be reached, and enacting, in strange and mournful travesty, the part of the merchantman who, to obtain the pearl of great price, was willing to barter all that he possessed.

Saint-Just was, in fact, before all things a dreamer, and one whose endeavour, from first to last, was to translate his visions into reality. Most men outlive their dreams, whether they look back upon them with the indulgent contempt of experience, or with a regret so keen that they hide it like a sore. But Saint-Just remained a visionary to the end, from his lonely boyhood onward; through the years when, with the terrible realities of life around him, inflexible and passionless as destiny itself, he 'reformed the army with the axe,' and sent to the guillotine, without pity or remorse, those who barred the path of revolution; up to

the very day when, red-handed, silent, and proud, he himself ascended the scaffold amidst the execrations of the people he had believed himself to serve. Truly there are dreams which are perilous. '*La vertu*,' he himself once said, '*a des nobles illusions qui la perdent.*'

Few men have given rise to opinions so diverse. The idol, for a brief space, of the capricious Parisian populace, a contemporary caricature, representing the Prince of Darkness and his wife engaged in a dispute as to the excellence of their respective handiwork, nevertheless reflects an opposite view :

'I made Mirabeau,' boasts the Devil's wife.

'I did worse,' is Satan's reply. 'I made Robespierre.'

'It is possible to go further,' is the retort. 'I made Saint-Just.'

And the Devil recognises the superiority of female workmanship.

For more than fifty years after his death his memory was held in such detestation that his family scarcely ventured to avow the relationship; while in '48—that period of revolution—something like an apotheosis of the young republican leader took place. The reaction was natural enough. We are told of Indians found paying divine honour to their own shadows. It is a cult to which men more advanced in civilisation are prone, and each stage of human development will possess its own calendar of saints.

The actual facts of his life can be briefly sum-



marised. Born about 1767, his childhood was passed in the little village of Blérancourt, from whence he was sent to Soissons to receive at the hands of the Oratorian Fathers the classical education that exercised so strong an influence upon his after life. Alike in his rhetorical references to ancient history, and in the ideals he plainly set before him, the effect of it is constantly apparent. '*Le monde est vide depuis les Romains,*' he cried; '*ils immolaient leurs affections . . . Imitons-les !*'

To imitate them was his own endeavour, and in that endeavour is found the key to much in his history.

School-life, apart from its work, did not commend itself to the silent, unsocial boy. Already addicted to the habit of dreaming, he is said to have resented interruption to the point of violence; and it was no doubt with relief that he returned to the quiet of his country home and to the studies he there carried on, in a garden bounded by a running stream and shaded by a hedge of yoke-elms, of the works of Plato, Machiavelli, Rousseau, and Montesquieu. These studies are said to have been interrupted, shortly after the completion of his nineteenth year, by a confinement of some months in a house of detention, at the request of his mother, and in consequence of a serious escapade. Such, at least, is the story contained in a publication of the *Société des Amis des Livres*. There seems no reason to doubt its authenticity, though the name of the culprit does not appear in the lists of the *détenus* preserved at Picpus.

One would be curious to learn whether it was during this enforced retirement that a poem was composed, manifestly modelled upon Voltaire, and shortly afterwards published. It raised at once the standard of revolt. Out of this boyish performance much capital has been made by those whose object is to depict the author in the darkest colours. It was, in fact, a satire, bitter and coarse, upon society as he knew it, doubtless at second hand; upon religion as he conceived it; upon Queen and Court and other more sacred subjects. But incapable of defence as it may be, the assertion that in this volume is to be sought the true Saint-Just, and that the man who at twenty, if not earlier, produced *Organt*, could at no time be sincere in virtue, discredits itself. The brief preface of the author is its best apology:—‘*J’ai vingt ans; j’ai mal fait; je pourrai faire mieux*’; and his maturer estimate of the work is contained in the fact that he withdrew it, two years later, from circulation.

Setting aside this crude performance—the work of a boy copyist—two other volumes remain: his *Considérations sur l’Esprit de la Révolution*, and a series of fragments *Sur les Institutions Républicaines*, only published after his death. It is in these compositions that are to be found the ideals he cherished, and the goal upon which his eyes were fixed.

The *Considérations* were written in the interval of quiet preceding his entry upon public life. At that time no presentiment of the part he was to

play had made itself felt, and had the veil been withdrawn from the future, the incredulous question of the Jew of old—*Is thy servant a dog?*—might well have risen to his lips. It was at this period that, painting to a friend the mode of existence he would choose, he drew a picture of a country life, nature as his companion, a wife and children '*pour mon cœur,*' and study to fill up his leisure hours. Time brought changes. '*Autres temps, autres discours,*' was his brief reply when reminded in after days of the outline he had sketched, 'when a man has to model himself upon Tarquin, he no longer reads Gessner's idylls.'

The literary result of this period of tranquillity was a notable performance to be the work of a writer of twenty-three. Notwithstanding the enthusiasm pervading it and the Utopian projects which fill the pages, it is singularly temperate in tone; whilst to the charge that it was a mere electioneering pamphlet the lie is given by the stern home-truths it contains. Saint-Just loved the people, but he did not flatter them. Boundless as was his faith in the nation's possibilities, it was in his eyes an eternal child, ruled by fear and by flattery alike. Nor did he refrain from denouncing in the strongest terms the brutalities by which the Revolution had already been defaced. But in the real power for good working within it he had a magnificent confidence. What, in his eyes, the nation needed was courage to be good—goodness being more rapidly produced in a people than in an individual. And, filled with this faith, he looked

forward to a republic softening laws, habits and customs becoming gentle, a free government under which health, pity, pardon should bear sway. With the ancient nobility he would do away, but there remained another proscribed by no law, the aristocracy of goodness. Turning to matters of religion, France, he declared, had not thrown down her church; she had but polished its stones, liberating God and Truth from the yoke of the priesthood. Capital punishment should be abolished; the purity of private morals re-established; divorce—the separation of those joined by God and nature—done away with, otherwise, ‘*que répondrai-je à mes enfants quand ils me demanderont leur mère ?*’ In twenty years, so runs the sanguine prophecy, when liberty should have had time to work, happiness would be at hand.

The anticipation of the speedy and bloodless triumph of revolutionary principles and the forecast of a near future of peace and happiness, strike one strangely, coming from the man who was to be the dominating influence of the Committee of Public Safety. One is reminded, as one reads, of Michelet’s epitome of the earlier spirit of the Revolution—‘O my enemies—there are no longer any enemies!’ Again, ‘*autres temps, autres discours,*’ would have been no doubt his reply. But to understand the part he took in what was to follow, it is essential to bear in mind his hopes, nor should it ever be forgotten that it was Saint-Just the dreamer, the believer in human perfectibility, who sent men relentlessly to the scaffold. His

severity, or call it his cruelty, was not gratuitous, or the result of mere lust for blood. Even M. Fleury is careful to allow so much, to separate him from the savages to whom brutality was in itself an end, and to admit that in his case violence was a weapon to be laid aside as soon as it could be dispensed with. As it has been said of another, so with him, '*il s'embrasa avec une furie meurtrière du désir de faire le ciel ici-bas.*' 'The most bloody revolutions,' was Souberbielle's dying assertion, 'are conscientious revolutions.' False ideas, ideas that hindered the triumph of truth, must be destroyed, and destroyed where alone they could be reached, in the persons of their representatives.

He was no materialist. From faith in Providence, in the soul, and in immortality, he was never apostate; and in however opposite a direction such beliefs should work, there is a stern logic on the part of those who hold them in the subordination of human life in the concrete to the furtherance of what they hold to be the truth.

For the present all went well. Side by side with literary and philosophical studies, he had carried on work of a practical nature, becoming in his own neighbourhood the apostle of that fair new gospel of humanity recently proclaimed. The leader of the young and of the poor, a member at twenty-one of the local departmental assembly, he was winning his way to prominence. His vehement faith in the cause he advocated, his enthusiasm and his singular power of language, were so many means of persuasion, supplemented by his personal

attraction and sombre beauty. Tall and slight, with melancholy blue eyes, regular features, and dark hair, his bearing was a little stiff, and the carriage of his head gave rise to Camille Desmoulins' gay ridicule. His manners, in spite of their gentleness, were not without a touch of cold austerity, foreshadowing the relentless inflexibility of later days. Such, outwardly, was Saint-Just, nick-named the Apocalyptic, or the Saint of the Terror, and recalling, observes Alison, the image of those desperate Scottish enthusiasts with whom he had so much and so little in common.

Not long after the appearance of the *Considérations*, the public career of the author was begun by his return to the National Convention. It was not the first time that he had been a candidate for election, and in the indignation with which he had resented his defeat the youth of the philosopher for once betrays itself.

'*Oh Dieu !*' he wrote some months later, '*faut-il que Brutus languisse loin de Rome ? Mon parti est pris, cependant. Si Brutus ne tue pas les autres, il se tuera lui-même.*'

It was a boyish outbreak, full of the exaggeration of his years. In youth time seems long, and waiting unendurable. Only later do men learn the cheerless wisdom appraising the mischances of life at a juster rate, when the acknowledgment is forced from them that the advantage of having something to hope for is apt to run the joy of fulfilment hard. Saint-Just, at any rate, had not

long to wait. He was to do killing enough and to spare before many more months had passed. Shortly after his complaint had been uttered he was returned to the National Convention, and had gone to Paris to take his part in the drama to be enacted there.

His first speech was an example of the rapidity with which opinions developed in those days. When the *Considérations* had been written he had still clung to a belief in the compatibility of incompatible faiths. He had looked forward to a monarchy purified, reformed, and controlled by revolution. But a few months had sufficed to dissolve the union of jarring creeds. When he now broke silence it was to declare sovereignty in itself a crime, and to demand that its representative should be treated, not as a citizen, but as a foe. Cæsar had been slain with no other formality but that of twenty-two stabs. Each citizen possessed the rights of Brutus.

The effect of the speech was electric. A new power had been recognised. The unknown boy sprang at once into notoriety, and made good his claim to be admitted into the foremost revolutionary ranks.

Thenceforth his course was steady and consistent. Though his position with regard to Robespierre was that of disciple to master, he has been credited by many with having been the more dominant spirit of the two. Arrived through fanaticism, says Thiers, at opinions reached by Robespierre through hatred alone, the latter was

in fact his plagiarist. By means of Robespierre the ideas originated by Saint-Just took effect. In the disciple, determination, ruthless and unswerving, counteracted the vacillations of the chief. Saint-Just's disregard of side issues and indifference to personal danger made him strong where Robespierre was weak. An immense faith in his cause steeled him against discouragement. Grave, serious, and severe, he pursued his way; now taking part in the proceedings of the Convention; now remaining a spectator, silent and melancholy, of the broils and disputes, the envenomed animosities, the brutal personal attacks, disfiguring its deliberations and crippling its forces; ready to sacrifice human life without remorse where it proved an obstacle to the realisation of the revolutionary ideal, and declaring pity to be treason. Except when kindled by the impersonal passion of the fanatic, cold, passive, and unmoved, he was still dreaming, his eyes set on the distance, of a regenerated France, of a nation become strong and just and righteous, of a state consolidated with virtue. Nor was the part to be played by himself likely to be absent from his dream. 'Saint-Just,' says Lamartine, 'respected in himself the Revolution as a dogma of which he sacrificed nothing to sentiments of humanity.' The words may read like irony, yet they are strictly true.

It is perhaps on his missions to the army of the Rhine that his character, at least as a man of action, stands out in clearest relief. It has been



asserted that he moulded his conduct upon the model of a Roman proconsul ; that under his rule defeat became criminal, and an error of judgment a capital offence. But it should be borne in mind that the situation was such as to palliate, if not to justify, the severity of the measures he employed to retrieve it. An army face to face with the enemy, demoralised, lost to discipline, destitute of the necessaries of life ; treasonable intrigues carried on with the foreigner ; Strasbourg crushed by a Terror of its own, and revolutionary tyranny triumphant—such was the condition of affairs with which he was called upon to cope. Desperate remedies were demanded if ruin was to be averted. Those remedies Saint-Just applied and applied with success. By inflexible severity, alike civil and military, combined with a personal courage in the field denied by none, and supplemented by the skill of a general, he brought back victory to the dispirited and disorganised armies of France ; whilst his attitude towards the invaders was in itself a presage of triumph. ‘The French Republic,’ was his reply to a flag of truce, ‘receives and sends only lead to its enemies.’

Friend or foe fared alike at his hands. His justice was, if inhuman, equal. A story is told of a friend of his boyhood sent to execution in punishment of a breach of discipline, Saint-Just declaring himself happy in the opportunity, by thus making an example of the man he loved, of sacrificing private sentiment to the public good. Whether the incident is true or false, it is no less indicative

of the character he bore than the fact that, during his brief engagement to the sister of his friend and colleague, Lebas, he warned his betrothed that, should she seek to interfere with the course of justice, he would find himself compelled to banish her from the camp.

There is, it is true, another side to the picture. There were times when he allowed himself a respite from the duties of his position—hours when, intermitting the labours of the general and the disciplinarian, he climbed a mountain with Lebas, and with the wide winter landscape spread below, and the hush of the country all around, the converse of the two was of Lebas's young wife, and of Henriette, his sister, whom Saint-Just loved; or when that scene occurred which, described by an eyewitness, throws so curious a light upon another side of the character of the young revolutionary: '*Je l'ai vu pleurer d'indignation et de rage au milieu de la société populaire de Strasbourg,*' says Nodier, '*lui qui ne pleurait pas souvent et qui ne pleurait jamais en vain, d'un outrage à la liberté de la foi et à la divinité du Saint-Sacrement. C'était un philosophe,*' adds the writer, '*extrêmement arriéré au prix de notre siècle.*'

It is well to take note of these side-scenes. But they are nothing more. It is with the Terror that the name of Saint-Just, and fairly enough, has been chiefly connected. Nor is it possible for any but a partisan to deny his responsibility with regard to that darkest period of the Revolution. Of a share in the guilt attaching to those months of delirium,

when Paris was turned into a shambles, and men went mad in their lust for blood, it is impossible to acquit him. It may indeed be urged that for part of that time he was absent with the army in Alsace; that he was not in Paris when the infamous decree was passed sweeping away the last traces of judicial procedure with regard to the suspects; there may be quoted in his defence the charge directed by Barère against him, together with his colleagues Couthon and Robespierre, of a desire to shake the prisons and to restore to the aristocracy their influence; with the added invective against those who would thus arrest 'the majestic and terrible course of the Revolution.' Evidence may also be brought to prove the comparative rarity of his signature on the *arrêtés* of the Committee of Public Safety. But when all that is possible has been admitted in his favour, and setting aside the decrees proposed or supported by himself, the fact remains that there are times when inaction is criminal, and that if not a positive agent in the worst horrors of those months, he was no less, by reason of his position and the influence he possessed, a participator in their guilt.

And yet at this very period, when Paris, a mass of seething and antagonistic forces, was approaching nearer and nearer to chaos; when the different and warring factions were ready to tear one another in pieces; when each party was engaged in a struggle meaning life or death to its individual members, and a man might well have forgotten the future in the stress of the present conflict, it is

clear that from the mind of Saint-Just the thought of the government, just and strong and merciful, to be founded when the work of destruction had been accomplished and order should have replaced anarchy, was never absent.

For him the present condition of the country was merely transitional. It was 'a passage from bad to good, from corruption to uprightness, from evil maxims to honest ones.' Nor did he cease to elaborate the details of the plan for that future Republic for which the Revolution was to prepare the way. To the establishment of such a Republic he looked confidently forward. Of his project, though left incomplete, it is possible to form an idea by means of the *Fragments sur des Institutions Républicaines*. In those pages, the fruit of his later thought, his scheme is embodied. In them the key to the paradox he presents is pre-eminently to be found.

There indeed the visionary stands discovered. There is no attempt at compromise. It is as if a presentiment of his approaching doom, a conviction that time was short, and that he was already 'racing with a racing death,' had warned him to practise no economy of truth.

Printed shortly after the writer's death and republished later by M. Charles Nodier, the *Fragments* have stamped him in the eyes of many as a Socialist. Labour for all, State education, the distribution amongst the needy of national property, and other measures associated with the Socialist programme, were in fact amongst those he advo-

cated ; while his denunciation of wealth is unqualified. But for law and order he had the respect of a statesman, for anarchy or government by force the repulsion of a philosopher, and in the final triumph of the first his faith remained indomitable. For the realisation of this dream he lived. 'The day I am convinced it is impossible to give the French nation habits of gentleness and energy, and to make them inexorable towards tyranny—that day I will stab myself'—was his declaration.

To his forecasts, hopeful though they remained, a shade of sternness had, it is true, been added since the days when, in the quiet of his country home, the *Considérations* had been written—the touch of severity serving as a connecting link, otherwise strangely lacking, between the writer and the man of action. A Republican government was to have virtue as its principle—there is the ideal; but if not virtue, then terror—there is the concession to practical necessity; and though force created neither reason nor right, it might be impossible to make either respected without it. But to the evil of the system then in existence he was never blind. 'Crime,' he said, 'has become *blasé* by the use of terror, as the palate becomes *blasé* by strong liquor.' And side by side with the reluctant acknowledgment of the provisional necessity of force, there is found running through the sections of his scheme dealing with such subjects as friendship, or children, or the treatment of the aged and of women, a singular vein of tender-

ness, corresponding with the curious confession—coming strangely, almost pitifully, from the ‘Prince of the Terror’—of the single personal ambition he cherished, the hope, namely, that ‘the memory of a lover of humanity might one day be held dear.’ The aspiration has, so far, met with but imperfect realisation, nor is it as a lover of humanity that Saint-Just has chiefly been remembered.

To enter at length into the details of his project and its strange and chimerical provisions would be impossible in this place. They must be studied in the *Institutions* themselves. Some of them, however, must be summarised if the character of the writer is to be understood; whilst it must also be borne in mind that the principles and rules laid down were not intended to apply to a future and ideal state; nor was he sketching the outline of a confessedly impossible Utopia. On the contrary, had Saint-Just lived, he would have lost no time in using all his power to enforce his provisions, so soon as the condition of France should have made the attempt feasible. ‘I ask some days still of Providence’—the words occur in the draft of his last, undelivered, speech—‘that I may call the meditations of the people and of their legislators to the *Institutions*.’ But those days were not granted. Saint-Just was in his grave before the people had leisure to attend to the lessons he would have taught them.

According to his provisions every man, arrived at the age of twenty-one, was to be bound to name his friends, the penalty for possessing none, or for

disavowing the belief in friendship, being banishment. Should the connection be terminated without due reason, the penalty was likewise banishment; whilst the same punishment was to be inflicted upon ingratitude—decrees, one cannot but imagine, which, carried into effect, would be productive of not a few gaps in the social circle.

For the care of little children the rules were curiously precise. They were to eat no meat and neither to be struck nor caressed. Banishment was again the penalty for a blow given to a child. A marriage proving childless was thereby annulled, unless the lack should be supplied by adoption. Love constituted the bond of wedlock, and, in contrast to the writer's earlier views, the tie was dissoluble. A blow to a woman was to be visited with banishment, nor could she be censured in public.

A vein of religion, or perhaps rather of religious sentiment, is apparent throughout. Of the materialistic atheism of another section of republicans Saint-Just was a contemptuous opponent. '*On croirait*,' he said once, in allusion to the arrogant dogmatism then prevalent—'*on croirait que le prêtre s'est fait athée, et que l'athée s'est fait prêtre.*' In the *Fragments*, belief in the Supreme Being is inculcated, as well as faith in immortality. Religious festivals are to be observed; and the souls of good citizens, of those who have died in their country's cause or who have cherished father and mother, are declared to be in the bosom of the Eternal.

Such are a few of the features of the system of government advocated by Saint-Just. It is easy to ridicule it; and Nodier, in reprinting the *Fragments*, is doubtless justified in guarding himself from possible misinterpretation by pointing out the absence of any risk to be apprehended from the publication, on the grounds that there was no danger that the ideas there set forth would gain adherents amongst later and more practical politicians. It was indeed not likely that the latter should be led to attempt the establishment of a system on the lines laid down by Saint-Just, having labour for its object, replacing luxury by poverty, constituting friendship the social link, and making age supreme in the magistracy. And yet—so M. Nodier adds, a little inconsistently—the republic contained in Saint-Just's 'political pastoral' was the sole one which could have awakened the sympathies of a poet, and some few hundreds might die for it.

Saint-Just did die for it. The weeks went by. The Terror was filling up the measure of its crimes; and all Europe was looking on, with horror and loathing, at the sanguinary spectacle. Even amongst the men responsible for what was going forward, some had their doubts, their moments of vacillation or compunction; others enjoyed intervals of relaxation, varying the labours of the man of ambition, the judge, or the executioner, with amusement, giving entertainments to women 'light as pleasure, discreet as death.' But to Saint-Just no divided service was possible. So far as



it is possible to judge, he pursued his way, undisturbed by misgiving or remorse, with the directness, the pitiless indifference to the trampling out of human life, of the fanatic. Even his engagement to Henriette Lebas had been terminated. More and more his whole powers of body, soul, and spirit were concentrated upon the cause for which alone he lived. His habits were those of an anchorite, his austere simplicity of life was so marked as to lay him open to the charge of affectation. Without the Revolution, says one critic, death would have surprised him in a boudoir. The assertion is incapable of proof, for the Revolution had absorbed alike energies, imagination, and affections. 'The tyrant of his passions'—such was the testimony of one charged at a later date with having been the friend of the conspirator, Saint-Just—'he had conquered them all, to know none but the love of his country.' That the doom to which that love, as he understood it, might lead, was constantly before his eyes there is no room to doubt. It is related that when informed, on his return from a successful campaign, of the enthusiasm entertained by the Parisian populace for himself—their idol of a moment—he observed sardonically that the acclamations of the crowd would be of a different nature the day he was led to the scaffold; and the sentence, 'I would willingly walk between the executioners, my feet in blood and tears,' found amongst his papers, witnesses to the persistency with which the forebodings of a like culmination haunted his imagination.

The end was at hand. Within the Convention group after group had been sacrificed to the dominant influence of the hour. The Girondists had been the first to fall, followed by the Hébertists. Danton and his friends had been the latest victims. The part played by Saint-Just in this last tragedy left the darkest stain of all upon his reputation. It is at this juncture that his conduct is least capable of palliation; and in pleading as his excuse an '*austérité farouche*' and a '*terrible bonne foi*,' his most ardent apologist, M. Hamel himself, is constrained to admit in that good faith an element of madness. He outraged not only humanity, but friendship. Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and the rest had been friends, brothers in arms, comrades, but they had become obstacles—so he had convinced himself, following in this case the lead of his chief—to the realisation of the republican ideal, and he did not hesitate to strike. It had been imagined, he declared, that none would venture to attack men surrounded by a great illusion, but, for his part, he had left such weaknesses behind: 'I have seen in the universe truth alone, and I have uttered it.' The blow was struck: Danton fell; it was a blow levelled at the Republic itself. It never recovered from it. '*J'entraîne Robespierre*'—Danton's well-known prophecy—found speedy fulfilment.

For the moment, however, hated and feared as they might be in secret, the victors were left without an open rival. The Convention had become subservient to the Committees, and the Committees

to the terrible triumvirate, Robespierre, Couthon, and Saint-Just. Outside, the Revolutionary Tribunal was sending its victims by hundreds to the scaffold. But Paris, maddened as it was alike by rage and fear, was becoming at length weary of the carnage, satiated with blood; and within the Convention a growing disquiet—the disquiet of men who look each upon his neighbour with distrust and anticipate a blow in the dark—was apparent.

Saint-Just had been absent on his fifth mission to the army. Setting out for it, some cloud of discouragement or foreboding would seem to have overshadowed his spirit. 'I go to be killed,' he said. 'Republicans have no longer any resting-place but the grave.'

For that last refuge he had not long to wait. It was not, however, upon the battlefield that he was to find it.

Lebas was once more his colleague, but over the affection of the two a shadow had fallen, the result of Saint-Just's estrangement from his friend's sister. Implacable and relentless in love as in politics, he refused to respond to the advances made by Henriette towards reconciliation; and when the girl addressed a letter to her brother and her lost lover conjointly, he handed it to Lebas, with the observation that it was for him alone. For Henriette, whatever had been her offence, and it is said to have been not more serious than a lapse in good taste, there was to be no place for repentance.

The usual success attended his presence with the army. The battle of Fleurus was won, Charleroi was taken, and, his task accomplished, he returned to Paris. During his absence, however, disunion had made rapid progress. Robespierre, in displeasure, had taken the perilous course of ceasing to attend the meetings of the Committees, leaving the Revolutionary Tribunal, armed with the terrible power he had been the means of bestowing upon it, of dispensing with the forms of justice, to proceed unchecked with its evil work. To what extent Saint-Just, who at once resumed his place at the Committee of Public Safety, was responsible for the events immediately preceding his fall it is, once more, difficult to determine. It may be pleaded that, to take a single instance, the list of the 368 victims sent, a week before his death, in one batch to the Tribunal was signed not by him but by nine members, all numbered among his opponents; that the multiplication of arrests was denounced by both him and Robespierre, and that, again and again, both were accused by their colleagues of erring on the side of moderation. But when every possible allowance has been made, it cannot be doubted that blood enough and to spare was on his hands to justify his punishment. If excuse is to be found for him, it must be sought rather in motives than in the acts resulting from them.

It was, at any rate, not long before he paid the penalty decreed against the man by whom blood is shed, although the proximate cause of his death

was a different one. Fear and jealousy had done their work, the tension could not be much longer prolonged, and a crisis was plainly imminent. When, on the 8th Thermidor, Robespierre made his appearance in the Convention, in his speech, unwisely vague, every man guiltily conscious of misuse of power discerned a personal menace. At night the Committees had met, full of fear and hatred, to concert in secret their plan of attack, when Saint-Just, entering, took his usual place, maddening his colleagues by the restraint imposed by his presence, himself calm, fearless, and unmoved—'*de marbre*' is the expression of an eye-witness—one man against ten, all eager to compass his ruin.

The night wore away, and still he kept his place. As he was seen to prepare, in sombre silence, his report upon the situation, each man present surmised that in it his own arraignment would be included. At times he broke that silence to protest, with cold contempt, against the methods of the Committee in 'improvising thunder' at every moment, or to counsel a return to juster and wiser measures. Thus, to quote Barère, did he hold his colleagues in check, paralyse their measures, and chill their zeal. Only at five o'clock, the long night over, did he relieve the Committee of his presence, and leave them free to arrange his destruction.

The sketch for his last speech remains, covered with erasures. It is the echo of his life, melancholy, proud, and fearless. In it he alludes to the

jealousies by which the Convention was torn, points to the abyss opening before the Republic, speaks of his personal danger, and of the small regret he would feel at quitting a world where it was necessary to be the witness and accomplice of evil. And then once more is struck the note of the vanity of all human ambition: 'To what end should a man seek to prolong his days? Renown is but an empty sound. Listen to past centuries—you will hear nothing; and those who in future ages shall wander by our funeral urns shall hear no more.'

The speech was never made. Rising in fierce revolt against the power by which it had been so long dominated, the Convention refused to listen; and during the whole remainder of the sitting Saint-Just remained, the shadow of his doom darkening above him, silent, impassive, and motionless, leaning against the tribune. The result was a foregone conclusion. Before the meeting dispersed he had been placed, with the master to whom he had been unswervingly true, with Lebas, his friend, Couthon and the younger Robespierre, under the arrest which was the prelude to death.

The succeeding scenes are marked by the same unalterable calm and proud endurance. He had always professed indifference to death, nor did he, brought face to face with it, give the lie to his professions. He met his end, admits Fleury, '*sans forfanterie, mais avec calme et dignité, sans emphase affectée, comme sans regret de la vie, comme sans frayeur.*'

Each recorded incident serves to complete the picture. At one moment, a temporary rescue having been effected by the Commune, it seemed possible that even yet the situation might be retrieved. It was proposed to issue a proclamation to the people. 'In whose name?' demanded Robespierre. 'In the name of the Convention,' was Saint-Just's reply. 'It is present in any place where we are.'

It had been no more than a transient gleam of hope. The Commune was attacked; resistance impossible. In despair, Lebas shot himself, the younger Robespierre threw himself from a window; his brother lay desperately wounded, whether by his own hand or not remains uncertain; but Saint-Just made no endeavour to elude his fate. His hands tied, he followed, amid the execrations of the mob, the litters on which his comrades were borne, 'as if,' some one says, 'assisting at a victory.' Once he broke silence. '*C'est pourtant moi qui ai fait cela,*' he said, as, lifting his bound hands, he pointed to the framed declaration of the Rights of Man.

In the car in which he was taken to the place of execution he stood upright, bare-headed, and pale, looking calmly down, in his singular beauty, upon the surging crowd, shouting and dancing as they followed the funeral procession, until that furious mob itself is said to have been touched by some wave of emotion. Then, facing the people for the last time from the scaffold, he stood erect, tall, and slight, and young, his feet bathed in the blood of

the master to whom he had been loyal to the last, and, still silent, died. He had not completed his twenty-seventh year.

Thus Louis Antoine de Saint-Just lived and dreamed. '*C'est une cruelle vertu*'—to quote the words of a contemporary—'*mais qui oserait la souiller par le mépris ?*'



## TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

1743?—1803

ABOUT the year 1743, there was born, in the island of Hayti, a black slave baby of royal African blood. It was this child who, in the last decade of his life, became successively General, Commander-in-chief, and Governor of the island, and who, finally, having incurred the jealousy of Napoleon Bonaparte, then First Consul, was thrown by him into prison. There, by foul means, he met his death.

It is a common habit with men, when the burden of responsibility grows too heavy to be borne with complacency, to shift it on to other shoulders, explaining that the part they play was not of their own seeking, but was thrust upon them by destiny or by that to which, if they are of a different turn of mind, they will give another name. And, whether or not such a disavowal of personal responsibility is wholly to be commended, there are cases in which it is impossible to deny it justification. For if the generality of human kind have themselves to thank for the fate which overtakes them—if they have courted, or, at least, have gone to meet it halfway—there are other men who have been tracked by their vocation before they

were so much as conscious of its existence, and on whose unexpectant ears the call has fallen as they were following the plough, or sitting at the receipt of custom, or, it may be, burying their dead.

To this last class it was that Toussaint L'Ouverture, the liberator of Hayti, belonged. To an altogether exceptional degree he was singled out for a destiny he had in no way invited, and had neither anticipated nor coveted, until the day when he was to pass from ministering submissively to the will of others to become himself a ruler of men, the saviour and the idol of his people, and was to prove himself, according to the impartial testimony of the French agent, Roume, 'a philosopher, a legislator, a general.'

Of the nature of his call he entertained no doubts. Not Joan of Arc herself was more convinced of its divine origin. His own words—reported from memory—give an account of the matter.

'At the beginning of the troubles of St. Domingo,' he said, 'I felt that I was destined to great things. When I received the divine intimation I was fifty-four years of age. . . . A necessity was laid upon me to commence my career. . . . A secret voice said to me, "Since the blacks are free they need a chief, and it is I who must be that chief, foretold by the Abbé Raynal." . . . France and the voice of God,' he added, 'have not deceived me.'

France and God! To the end, bound, betrayed, forsaken, faith in the last never failed him. But

his trust in France, cling to it as he might and did, with a strange and obstinate persistence, must have received many rude shocks.

To the conviction, profound and intense, that he was the instrument and agent of the divine will, was no doubt due part at least of his almost miraculous ascendancy over the unruly elements he was set to govern ; and to leave out of sight or to deny the factor of religious enthusiasm is to relinquish the only key to the enigma presented by his career. When the obedience of the people was rendered to Toussaint L'Ouverture, till lately a slave amongst fellow-slaves, that obedience was combined with something of the veneration due to the representative of a higher power ; whilst on his part, when he preached pity and forgiveness, and enjoined upon a race thirsting for blood and for vengeance the duty of oblivion of past wrongs, he spoke with the authority of the accredited and conscious ambassador of heaven.

‘This is the path,’ he would tell his troops, unfolding to them his policy of conciliation and mercy, ‘which we must all follow to draw down upon us the blessing of the Lord.’ In their struggle for freedom they were fighting in a sacred cause, and as the soldiers of Christ and of God, they were soldiers whose hands must be pure from innocent blood. And for a time, till the mouth of the preacher was stopped, and his voice silenced, the gospel he proclaimed compelled the submission of the half-civilised masses to whom it was addressed.

The genuineness of the religion of Toussaint L'Ouverture has been called in question; he has been accused of using the name of God for the furtherance of personal interests and ambitions. Thus it was declared by one of his contemporaries that his actions were covered with so profound a veil of hypocrisy that all who approached him—truly a significant admission—were betrayed into an opinion of the purity of his intentions. But cant, carried so far as to extend to deeds, is difficult to distinguish from virtue; and, as an anonymous biographer shrewdly remarked, 'when a man will, from mere hypocrisy, act well and nobly to the end of his life, there is no way to prove the guilt against him.' At any rate, he was never convicted of falsehood; in no case did his actions give the lie to his professions; nor was the veil ever torn off by which he convinced those who approached him of his rectitude. And if God is not mocked, it may be taken as a general rule that, in the long-run, neither is man.

Character is not formed in a day, and the principles which made Toussaint L'Ouverture what he was must have been the growth of a lifetime. But of the years before the 'call' sounded on his ears little is known, and in the memoirs in which he vindicated his honour to Napoleon and to the world, only one mention of them is made.

*'J'ai été esclave,'* he wrote; *'j'ose l'avouer. Mais je n'ai jamais essuyé même des reproches de la part de mes maîtres.'*

'We went to labour in the field,' he said on another occasion, describing the peaceful routine of those bygone days, 'my wife and I, hand in hand.' Whilst on Sundays and festivals, the landmarks of that quiet life, a devout Catholic, he attended mass, accompanied by those nearest him in kin, returning to spend the day together 'as a family,' and concluding it with prayer.

He had acquired in his youth some knowledge of French, and even a little Latin; and the works of the slave Epictetus, together with those of the Abbé Raynal, the early abolitionist, are said to have constituted the favourite studies of the future leader of the blacks. For the rest, a conscientious servant, trusted and valued, he lived at peace, indulging so little ambition to rise above his station, that though, by thrift and industry, he had accumulated a certain amount of property, it does not appear to have occurred to him to employ his savings in the purchase of his freedom. He could with truth assert in later days that ambition had never been his master.

Of his absentee owner, the Comte de Breda, little is known, except that under the supervision of the agent, Bayou, the slaves upon his estate were not harshly treated, and that in after years, when Toussaint had already achieved distinction, a singular transaction is reported to have taken place. For the sum of four thousand and eighty francs, the possession of the negro chief, '*tout général qu'il est,*' was then transferred to a mulatto purchaser, a curious proof of the contemptuous

incredulity entertained by their masters as to the permanence of the enfranchisement already won by the blacks.

And what was the man thus bought and sold—the man who, after half a century of contented obscurity, became with strange suddenness the supreme and dominating power in the land of his birth; who mastered, wherever he appeared, the fierce and turbulent elements at work in the desperate struggle for freedom; and moved among the disordered multitudes like the very spirit of mercy and peace, curbing the passions, roused to fever-heat, which had been let loose?

To form a just estimation it is necessary to compare him with the other figures foremost in the struggle. The generality of men are, if not the reflection of their surroundings, at least the product of the atmosphere they breathe. But there are some—the few—whose lives are, in their fair and transient irradiation, the demonstration of the fact that light, like the angel in the block of unhewn marble, sleeps in humanity.

It was to these elect few that Toussaint L'Ouverture belonged. Around him, before and after him, was darkness, and it was no wonder if, looking upon the phenomenon of his life, there should have seemed to the people of his race something superhuman about the man they loved.

To set him side by side with the other leaders of the movement is to mark at once the gulf between them. Dessalines, after himself the most popular of the black generals, was a brave soldier

and not wanting in ability, but brutal and blood-thirsty—a man who, proclaiming later on a wholesale massacre of the whites, confessed himself sardonically to be ‘a little unlike’ his great predecessor. Christophe, afterwards King of Hayti, was courageous and for the most part temperate, but he betrayed his master and his trust in the day of disaster. Jean François, the leader of the blacks on their first rising, was an able man, but a lover of luxury and not distinguished for courage; while Biassou, his second in command, was fiery, vindictive, and drunken. Rigaud, too, the chief of the mulattoes, whilst allowing himself to be made the tool of the whites in his jealousy of the negro race, was yet ready to turn on the very race whose purpose he had served and to massacre them.

The influence of these men, and of those of their type by whom Toussaint was surrounded—men brought to the front by foreign wars as well as by civil strife—would have been ever (that of Christophe perhaps excepted) in favour of bloodshed, of retaliation, and of revenge. But, practically alone, Toussaint withstood them. He used these men, and some of them he loved, but he was not guided by them. His own hand was kept upon the helm.

‘Whoever those may have been,’ he once wrote, ‘of whom I was obliged to make use . . . I will one day prove that no one less than myself merits the reproach of having allowed myself to be governed.’

He possessed, in truth, the rare capacity, inval-

able in a leader, of bending stubborn instruments to execute his will, and of employing the passions of men to carry out his purposes, his clear and penetrating insight discerning the special use to which each one could be put. 'God forbid,' he answered, when urged to arrest Rigaud, his irreconcilable foe, secret or open ; 'I have need of Rigaud. He is violent. I want him for carrying on war, and that war is necessary to me. The mulatto caste is superior to my own. If I take Rigaud from them, they would perhaps find another superior to him. I know Rigaud ; he gives up the bridle when he gallops ; he shows his arm when he strikes. For me, I gallop also, but I know where to stop ; and when I strike I am felt, not seen. I know how to put the people in movement ; but when I appear all must be tranquil.'

It is a course a man can venture to pursue only when he can count upon that indeterminate quantity, personal influence. Toussaint was pre-eminently able to count upon it. When he was present all gave way before him.

'Soldiers of the 9th,' he once cried, recognising a regiment of deserters who had been carried over by their officers to the enemy, and advancing alone to meet them ; 'soldiers of the 9th, will you dare fire on your general, on your father, and on your brothers ?'

And the soldiers of the 9th, stricken to the heart, fell on their knees before him.

He was the idol of his troops. His courage, amounting almost to temerity, the fearlessness



with which he risked his life again and again, were so great that at times and to a superstitious people he seemed to bear a charmed life ; whilst by his strenuous activity, his unintermitted labours, it was said that he would wear out three secretaries, or three horses, in a day. Gifted with extraordinary physical strength, he would set fatigue and sickness at defiance, and his movements were of a rapidity so astonishing, that to the ignorant he seemed superior to time and space. Yet the love that was borne him was not only the result of the services he had rendered his countrymen, nor yet because to him primarily their freedom was due, but more than all because Toussaint was Toussaint, their brother and their friend.

If he was loved to the verge of idolatry he knew also how to make himself feared, and a just severity found its place in his rule. Notwithstanding his rare and beautiful humility he could speak as a man born to govern ; while with profound sagacity he made his appeal to every instinct, good or bad, of the race he ruled. There is nothing more striking in the whole of his career than his method of dealing with the revolted and seditious mulattoes, at a time when their smouldering animosity had broken out into open insurrection.

On the eve of taking the field against those of the body actually under arms he summoned the members of the caste left behind in the capital to meet him, and addressing them, according to his wont, from the pulpit of the principal church of the city, not only displayed an intimate acquaintance

with their machinations, but played upon the superstitious dread inspired by himself.

'I see to the bottom of your hearts,' he told the conscience-stricken conspirators sternly. 'You are ready to rise against me. But though all the troops are quitting the west, I leave behind me my eye and my arm; my eye which will watch you, my arm which, if necessary, will smite you.'

On his return to the city he once more summoned the population to the same meeting-place. The civic authorities were present, the church was filled with expectant crowds, and, closely guarded in the midst of the troops, the mulatto conspirators awaited their sentence. But this time it was the tidings of forgiveness of sin, of the blotting out of grudges, which were declared by the victor. He proclaimed to the traitors pardon and reconciliation, bestowed upon them money and clothing, and let them go free.

It was by such deeds as these that this 'hero of charity' won his way to hearts and converted enemies into friends and followers.

'Ah, it is you, Frémont,' was his kindly greeting to a soldier brought before him as a deserter. 'Fortune will not allow you to be separated from me.' The man returned to his duty and remained faithful to the end.

A curious and graphic account of the negro chief is given by an English officer, Captain Rainsford, who, driven by stress of weather on to the Haytian coast at a time when England was at war with France, contrived to pass himself off as an Ameri-

can, and, as such, had opportunities of forming an independent opinion of Toussaint in his private and public character. In the former capacity he mixed on a footing of perfect equality with those around him, dining at the hotel, and playing billiards afterwards with the other guests; whilst, as Commander-in-chief of the troops, the utmost attention to rank and ceremony was enforced, and what the Englishman characterised as an 'orderly ferocity' prevailed among the blacks. Of Toussaint's own generosity, Rainsford made personal experience when, later on, in the absence of the chief, his nationality was detected, and he was condemned to death as a spy. Upon the sentence being, however, sent to receive confirmation from L'Ouverture, the latter ordered the release of the prisoner, merely adding the warning that he must never return to the island without the proper passports.

If, in one respect, his policy of conciliation was a failure, if he did not succeed in dispelling the jealousy of the former rulers of the island, they, nevertheless, gave him the confidence due to a man who had never been known to break a pledge. No more marked proof could be given of the trust he inspired than the fact that, when the British troops were about to evacuate the island, the general in command repaired, almost unattended, to the negro camp. On his arrival he was kept waiting for a considerable time before L'Ouverture, entering, presented his guest with two letters, the one from Roume, the French

Commissioner, urging the arrest of the English general; the other, Toussaint's own reply. Not till it had been made would he receive his visitor.

Toussaint had not succeeded in achieving what would, perhaps, have been scarcely less than a miracle. Black and white remained at heart hostile the one to the other. But in all else his policy had triumphed. As philosopher and as legislator he had carried all before him. The foreign foes had been forced to withdraw from the country; negro freedom had been established throughout the length and breadth of the island, and had been formally recognised by France. With *Te Deums*, announced by salvos of artillery, and with the celebration of solemn masses, thanks had been rendered to God. A general amnesty had been proclaimed, and the doctrine of a universal brotherhood, independent of colour or race, was again set forth. Once more, from the pulpits of the church, Toussaint, high priest of that strange new creed, enjoined upon those who heard him the duty of oblivion of past injuries; and, for the time at least, peace reigned, and warring passions submitted to the control of his all-powerful will. Law and order were on the way to be restored; religion and morals were gaining ground; the arts—music and the theatre—received encouragement; the rights of men of all colours were safeguarded, and, by a wise provision—bitterly reviled by a coloured biographer as the restoration of slavery—a five years' apprenticeship, on easy terms, would have accustomed the negroes, indolent by nature, to a

right use of freedom, and have prevented the land from remaining uncultivated.

Toussaint had a right to enforce the duty of labour, for never man worked harder; it is said that he rarely allowed himself more than two hours' sleep, and luxury and idleness were unknown to him. Yet he did not lose sight of the necessity of appealing to the imagination of the races with which he had to deal. To personal habits of a rigid simplicity almost amounting to asceticism, he united, on public occasions, the display of a royal state calculated to impress Frenchman and negro alike. In his home among the mountains, he gave audience like a king, surrounded by a splendid retinue, to the people who crowded to pay him homage, and, though the humblest of men, he never forgot the dignity of his position.

All was going well, and prosperity was revisiting the island. For himself he asked nothing, claimed no reward. 'My task,' he said, 'is accomplished.'

Evil days, however, were at hand. The power of Toussaint, of which the very prosperity enjoyed by the island was proof, was his crime, and for that crime vengeance was preparing to overtake him.

It was the year 1801. Peace had been concluded between France and England, and Napoleon was at liberty to turn his attention westward to the favourite colony of France—an island where liberty and equality were not theories but facts, where,

under a strong and beneficent rule, hostile races were beginning to live at peace, and with which, as it recovered from its struggle, all was beginning to be well. This, or most of it, he saw to be due to the influence, the force, moral and physical, of a single man; and Napoleon disliked what he saw.

Toussaint, it was true, asked nothing better than to serve France. There had, indeed, been a time when, despairing of obtaining justice at her hands—a time, too, when Frenchmen were at war with Frenchmen—he had, as a royalist, joined with Spain in opposition to the representatives of the French Republic. But the alliance had been short-lived, and once more he had sworn allegiance to the country to which he felt, strangely enough, that it was due. The negroes of St. Domingo had little enough, one would think, to thank France for; yet it was, nevertheless, to France, so long as it was possible, that, with incredible persistence, their leader clung.

But now when, at the height of his success, Toussaint had written again and again to the ruler he would have wished to regard as a brother, when he had begged that men capable of administering public affairs and of filling those offices for which negroes were still unfit should be sent from France, and when his letters had been met only by an ominous silence, a vague disquietude, mingled with something like wounded affection, stirred within him.

‘Bonaparte is wrong not to write to me,’ he said

mournfully—even, it is related, with tears, the tears of a strong, yet emotional nature—‘he must have listened to my enemies.’

It was soon clear that Bonaparte had, indeed, listened to the enemies of the negro chief—the man whom he appeared to consider, in some strange manner, as his rival, the ‘first of the blacks’—nor was it long before rumours reached the island of the manning and equipment of a powerful armament, whose destination was said to be St. Domingo.

At the report of the coming expedition the whites, always ready to turn upon their protector and benefactor, openly congratulated themselves, and, as Toussaint heard of their insolent rejoicing, his tolerance, for once, gave way, and he banished the men who had thus requited his clemency. Yet, when the result of his action appeared in the solicitation of a passport by one of their countrymen, he was visibly moved.

‘Why do you wish to go?’ he asked, with emotion, ‘you, whom I esteem and love?’

The black man and the white, representatives of rival races, confronted one another, and the latter spoke his mind—

‘Because I am white,’ he answered bluntly, ‘and because you are on the eve of being the irritated chief of the blacks.’

Possibly Toussaint recognised the force of the argument. Sorrowfully he let his friend go. The action of the First Consul was already bearing fruit; the amalgamating elements were separating

once more; and still there was dead silence, so far as Toussaint was concerned, on the part of Napoleon. But in France the silence had been significantly broken.

A proposed constitution for Hayti had been drawn up and sent to the mother country for confirmation. By its provisions it finally abolished slavery in the island, and made Toussaint L'Ouverture Governor for life. On a council composed of nine members eight were whites, and the remaining one a mulatto, the race of Toussaint himself, the guiding spirit, being wholly unrepresented. But Napoleon, blind with anger, was not a man to take account of such a fact as this, and his jealousy, long smouldering, blazed out.

'*C'est un esclave révolté,*' said the champion of European liberty, '*qu'il faut punir. L'honneur de la France est outragé.*' Toussaint, who with patient and pathetic confidence in the generosity of the man who ruled the destinies of France, was awaiting his approval, was characterised by Bonaparte as '*un chef de brigands,*' to be brought to justice. His doom was sealed.

Not yet, however, prepared to throw off the mask, Napoleon sent for Toussaint's two sons, in France for purposes of education, in order to impart to them the pacific intentions of the fleet to be despatched to Hayti; spoke in terms of extravagant laudation of the '*esclave révolté,*' and presented them with gifts of value and with his directions to proceed to St. Domingo and to assure their father of the uprightness of the First Consul's



intentions. The story of what followed is well known.

‘We must perish,’ said Toussaint, as he watched from a height the French armament. ‘All France is coming to St. Domingo. She has been deceived. She comes to take revenge, and to enslave the blacks.’

He was right. Unaccountable as was the action of Napoleon to the gentle and generous spirit of his victim, the latter had divined with sufficient correctness the aim of the expedition. War again laid waste the land. The despairing population compelled to yield to the overwhelming strength of the invading forces, set fire to their cities as they retreated, leaving one after another a mass of ashes as they retired into the mountain fastnesses there to carry on the unequal struggle. For three months that struggle was kept up—month after month during which Toussaint, surely with despair at his heart, watched the fruit of the labours of years being destroyed before his eyes; and, worse still, found himself forsaken by friend after friend, by Christophe, Dessalines, his two brothers and his nephew—all deserters in the day of necessity—whilst his own son, to crown all, when offered his choice, declared himself a faithful servant of France who could never resolve to bear arms against her.

The time came when it was no longer possible even for Toussaint’s gallant spirit to hold out. Yet, in his ruin, and when further resistance was hopeless, he was powerful enough to wring from the enemy favourable terms of surrender—

favourable, that is, for army and people. For himself, as he had before asked nothing, so he would now accept nothing; and when the French general, anxious to propitiate the man he hated, would have offered him the post of Governor of the city of St. Domingo, he declined it. His only personal demand was for liberty to live in obscurity and in silence among the mountains.

At the city of Cap François—one of the towns reduced to ruins—he met the French general, Leclerc, in order to make the necessary arrangements for the future government of the island. His journey thither, fallen as he was, resembled the triumph of a conqueror. Crowds prostrated themselves at his feet, hailing him author of the liberty assured to them by oath—so far as French oaths could assure it. As he approached his destination an officer, sent by Christophe, rode up to ask on his chief's behalf the orders of the general he had deserted.

'Colonel,' answered L'Ouverture with the gentle and courteous dignity which never failed him, '*je vous vois avec plaisir, mais je n'ai pas de réponse à vous faire au sujet de votre mission.*'

There was for the false friend no place for repentance. It was Toussaint's only vengeance.

The interview with Leclerc took place, characterised by flattery on the one side, and by quiet dignity on the other. Once only the old fighting spirit flashed out. Had Toussaint decided to carry on the struggle, where, the Frenchman asked, would he have found arms and ammunition to keep it up?

'*J'aurais pris les vôtres,*' was the answer of the black chief.

In tears his veterans received the farewell address of the general who was never to lead them again, and L'Ouverture passed out of their sight into the retirement of his home. It was the end of the last act but one of the tragedy.

There, amongst his mountains, surrounded by his family and in the midst of those who loved him, he might yet have found happiness. But he was still too powerful to be permitted to end his days in peace. There was one place it was not in his power to relinquish—the place he held in the hearts of the people, and while this was his, no undivided rule could be enjoyed by the victors in Hayti. A plot was laid to entrap him, and, in spite of warnings, Toussaint refused to avoid the snare. The French general, Brunet, in terms of studied cordiality, had written to invite him to his house, in order that together they might concert measures for the further pacification of the island. When Toussaint responded to the invitation he was arrested, by a flagrant breach of good faith, and sent a prisoner to France.

The sequel can be briefly told. In a dungeon at Joux, purposely selected, it has been believed, in order that damp and cold might prove fatal to an inmate of his race and blood, Toussaint L'Ouverture dragged out nine months, denied so much as a hearing in his own defence. Bonaparte never looked upon the face of his victim. In the misery of that captivity he drew up, in his memoirs,

couched as they were in language studiously temperate, a terrible indictment against France and the man who was her ruler. No injustice had been too great, no indignity too petty, to be put upon him. The means of defence, so far as it was possible, had been taken from him, his papers seized. '*N'est-ce pas couper les jambes à quelqu'un, et lui ordonner de marcher?*' he asked; '*n'est-ce pas lui couper la langue et lui dire de parler?*' And coming to lesser matters, he complained that the orders no doubt given by the First Consul and his ministers that the necessities of life should be supplied to him—is his confidence irony or innocence?—had been unexecuted, and that the cast-off rags of soldiers, '*à moitié pourris,*' had been sent him for clothing. Again his appeal is made to the man from whom he persisted in looking for justice. Will Napoleon, a soldier himself, leave an old soldier to die in prison? '*Premier Consul,*' he cries, '*père de tous les militaires, juge intègre, défenseur de l'innocence, prononcez donc sur mon sort. Mes plaies sont très profondes, portez y le remède. . . . Vous êtes médecin; je compte entièrement sur votre justice.*'

Another physician, healer of all wounds and more powerful than the First Consul, was at hand. In prison, old, fallen, defeated, far from home and country, Toussaint L'Ouverture was still dangerous. So long as he drew breath the hopes of the deceived and desperate population of St. Domingo would centre upon him. Yet there are crimes which, none knew better than Napoleon, must be

executed in the dark ; to kill, publicly and openly, the negro liberator was a deed he dared not do. And the iron constitution of the '*vieux militaire*' had resisted cold and grief and privation. The ordinary prison allowance of food had been diminished, but in vain. The faithful servant who had been his one companion had been removed, and still solitude had not killed him. It was then that the governor of the prison took two short holidays. During the first he confided the keys of the dungeon to his lieutenant, Captain Colomier. But Colomier was obtuse. He even bettered the condition of the unhappy captive by allowing him the coffee for which he craved. On the governor's return he found matters no further advanced than he had left them. Presently he took another journey. On this occasion Colomier was not intrusted with the keys of the dungeons. The prisoners, he was told, had need of nothing. By the time the governor returned, after four days' absence, of one prisoner, at least, the words were true. Toussaint L'Ouverture needed nothing. He lay in his cell, dead from starvation.

## JOHN MITCHEL

1815-1875

‘Poor Mitchel,’ said Carlyle. ‘I told him he would most likely be hanged, but I told him too they could not hang the immortal part of him.’

The prophecy was not fulfilled. John Mitchel was not hanged. But he was tried, convicted, and transported, and close upon half of his life was spent in a foreign land. The period covered by his public career in Ireland was not more than two years and a half. But time is not measured by years. ‘*Alors*,’ says Michelet of the revolutionary period in Paris, ‘*il n’y avait plus de temps; la Révolution l’avait tué, avec bien d’autres choses.*’ Into that short space was compressed, for Mitchel, all that, to a man of his temperament, made life best worth living.

Amongst the multitude of Irishmen who have devoted themselves to the attempt to free their country from what they regarded as a foreign despotism, John Mitchel is distinguished, not so much by any special prominence in character, gifts, or achievements, as by the fact that, unlike most of the working members of the brotherhood of revolution, he has left behind him a personal record of exceptional brilliance and force, by which it is possible to form a clear judgment of the man

himself, as well as of his motives, aims, aspirations, and hopes.

It is not often that those engaged in an active struggle with society have had time or leisure to devote to a like performance; or that, where time and leisure, as in Mitchel's case, followed upon failure, they have cared, while fresh from the battle and suffering the penalties of defeat, to employ them as he did. It is rarer still that the opportunity and the inclination to commit past experience and present hopes and faiths to paper should be accompanied by an unusual power of literary expression. That this is the case with John Mitchel—as with Wolfe Tone, the man who, fifty years earlier, had lifted the banner of revolt—renders him a convenient representative of his special section of the revolutionary army. Had other reasons to be sought for thus singling him out, they might be found in the tribute paid to his memory by Carlyle's biographer when, recording the speech already quoted, he added that the 'immortal part' of John Mitchel was still working in dynamite conspiracies—a striking testimony to the influence he has exercised, in the opinion of an adversary, on the history of his country.

Yet, if John Mitchel was a revolutionist, and one of the most irreconcilable of the band, he was such not so much by nature and creed as through stress of circumstances. In his sympathies he was narrowed by the intense nationality alike the snare and the strength of the Irish race. Of this spirit of nationality he himself defined the limitations

when he wrote that 'Ireland without the Irish—the Irish out of Ireland—neither of these can be our country.' The combination of the native soil and the native race was necessary to command his allegiance. He did not possess a spark of the enthusiasm for the cause of humanity at large, or of the love for liberty in the abstract by which the best and purest revolutionists of the preceding century had felt their blood fired; nor had he any sense of brotherhood with the men who, by other means and different methods, were engaged in a struggle of a kindred nature to his own. 'Socialists,' he says, with strange violence, 'are something worse than wild beasts,' and again, describing events in Paris in 1848, 'they [the Communists] were swept from the streets with grape and canister—the only way of dealing with such unhappy creatures.' It is more remarkable still that when in later days the war broke out in America between North and South, his sympathies should have been vehemently engaged on the side of the Confederate States and slavery. Through his own country and her wrongs alone he made common cause with the men who in like case—as in Poland and Hungary—were struggling with their evil destiny. Had Ireland's wrongs been redressed, he would, in theory at least, have had no hesitation in beating his sword into a ploughshare.

In describing the principles of his lifelong friend and fellow-convict, John Martin, he gives an account of his own, and furnishes the key to the



line of conduct based upon them: 'Instead of being a Jacobin and natural enemy of law and order, he venerates law beyond all other earthly things . . . would for ever prefer to bear with unjust institutions, corruptly administered, rather than disquiet himself and others in a struggle to abolish them.' At the same time, 'property is an institution of society—not a divine endowment whose title-deed is in heaven; the uses and trusts of it are the benefit of society; the sanction of it is the authority of society; but when matters have come to that utterly intolerable condition they have long been in in Ireland, society itself stands dissolved—a *fortiori*, property is forfeited. . . . If we must needs go through a sore agony of anarchy before we can enjoy the blessings of true order and law again, in the name of God, let us go through it at once.'

Whilst a narrow and possibly a selfish love for his own country was one of Mitchel's two master passions, hatred of England—the 'enemy' to which constant reference is made in his journal—was the other.

It is indeed significant that, writing in days when the mist of prejudice had had time to clear, he confesses that, looking back, and striving to analyse the motives by which he had been actuated, he had discovered in them perhaps less of love than of hate, less devotion to truth and justice than raging wrath against cant and insolence. That retribution should follow upon wrongdoing had ever been his constant hope. 'Punishment

of England for the crimes of England—this righteous vengeance I seek, and shall seek. Let but justice be done; let Ireland's wrong be righted; and the wrong done to me and mine is more than avenged; for the whole is greater than its part. . . . For such vengeance I do vehemently thirst and burn.'

Thus he wrote from the cabin cell in the hulk at Bermuda to which he had been consigned in pursuance of the sentence of transportation obtained by Government by means of a flagrant disregard of the very forms of justice.

The introduction to the *Jail Journal*, published after he had effected his escape, gives an account of the condition of the country preceding what proved to be for him a lifelong exile—a state of things by which men like himself, an Ulster Protestant, John Martin, calm, gentle, and long-suffering, Smith O'Brien, the high-minded representative of the landlord class, and a crowd of others had been converted first into rebels, then into convicted felons. 'At the end of six years,' he writes, 'I can set down these things calmly, but to see them might have driven a wise man mad.'

After a brief and graphic review of the earlier history of Ireland, of her reiterated deaths and repeated resurrections, he passes on to the period of the Penal Laws, to the ruin of Irish manufactures consequent upon British legislation, and to the accompanying misery—'one can scarcely believe,' he says, 'that the sun shone as he is wont in those days'—to the partial revival of prosperity

towards the close of the eighteenth century, and to the extinction of that gleam of hope at the time of the Union. And next he tells of the result of that measure; of yearly famines, of an entire country lying under the shadow of death; of a condition of things described by Sir John Newport in the House of Commons when he told how the priest of one parish had gone round and administered the Sacraments of the Dying to every man, woman, and child within it, all *in articulo mortis* through starvation.

It was during this dark portion of his country's history that Mitchel himself was born, in the year 1815, and that his boyhood and early manhood was passed. In 1829 the boon of Catholic emancipation was thrown as a sop to the Irish people; but great as were the benefits conferred by that act of tardy justice, it was impossible that it should produce the same effect upon the son of a Presbyterian minister of Scotch extraction as upon those of his countrymen who had laboured under the disabilities it removed. Keenly alive as Mitchel was to the injustice of the former system, he did not hesitate on the contrary to characterise the Bill as a misfortune for the country at large, in removing a palpable and crying grievance, while leaving other evils unredressed. 'Respectable Catholics,' he said bitterly, 'were contented and became West Britons from that day.' The starving people were left to fight their battles unassisted.

Such being his attitude towards the measure, it

was inevitable that he should find himself in opposition to the man by whose methods of legal agitation it had been—ostensibly at least—won ; and while recognising the great gifts of O'Connell, he was wholly out of sympathy with him. His description of the Liberator is so vivid and so striking an example of his power of word-painting that it is worth quoting here.

‘ At the head of that open and legal agitation,’ he wrote, ‘ was a man of giant proportions in body and in mind ; with no profound learning, indeed, even in his own profession of the law, but with a vast and varied knowledge of human nature, in all its strength and especially in all its weakness ; with a voice like thunder and earthquake, yet musical and soft at will as the song of birds ; with a genius and fancy tempestuous, playful, cloudy, fiery, mournful, merry, lofty and mean by turns, as the mood was on him—a humour broad, bacchant, riant, genial and jovial—with profound and spontaneous natural feeling, and superhuman and subterhuman passions, yet withal a boundless fund of masterly affectation and consummate histrionism, hating and loving heartily, outrageous in his merriment and passionate in his lamentation, he had the power to make other men hate or love, laugh or weep, at his good pleasure ; insomuch that Daniel O'Connell, by virtue of being more intensely Irish, carrying to a more extravagant pitch all Irish strength and passion and weakness than other Irishmen, led and swayed his people by a kind of divine, or else diabolic, right.’

‘He led them,’ adds Mitchel, ‘as I believe, all wrong, for forty years.’ A lawyer, he could not bring himself to defy British law. A Catholic, he was blind to the fact that, at the time, the Church was opposed to the cause of Irish liberty. The name and idea of a Republic, the dream of all Irishmen in their great distress, was abhorrent to him.

It was during the period of O’Connell’s dominating that Mitchel grew to manhood. Upon the portion of his life preceding his entrance upon a public career there is no need to linger. There was little to distinguish it from that led by hundreds of his countrymen. Educated in the first place at Newry, where his father’s home was fixed, he afterwards graduated at Trinity College, Dublin, taking his degree before he was fifteen. He was, however, never a resident student, and entering at twenty-one the office of a solicitor at Newry, it was in these surroundings that the following twelve years were mainly spent, an early marriage having rendered it imperatively necessary that he should engage without delay in a profession affording a hope of support for himself and his family.

Though the work of an attorney was never congenial, this period of his life was a happy one. His marriage—leading in the first place to a brief imprisonment, the bride having been a girl of seventeen, with whom he had run away—had proved in all respects successful. Children were born to him; his dearest friend, John Martin, lived within easy reach; and his ardent love of

nature—always a distinguishing feature in his character—must have gone some way towards reconciling him to remaining at a distance from the centre towards which his attention and interest were increasingly attracted. Again and again throughout his life, from the days when, as a boy, it was his habit to wander at night about the hills, or to seek at sunrise the mountain tops, until that sadder hour when, shortly before his death, revisiting Ireland after long years of exile, he was seen to tremble from head to foot as he first caught sight of an Irish hill—again and again his love of nature breaks forth. Thus, writing to Martin in 1842, when the May time was in his blood, he says:—

‘When I see the first violet of any spring without a passionate yearning, without a fulness of the throat that makes me think the fountain of sweet tears is hardly yet hermetically sealed in me; when the singing of the birds is to me only a tuneless whistle; and that brave overhanging firmament nothing but a pestilent congregation of vapours—then let my grave be dug, and the sooner and deeper the better.’

‘The tinkle, or murmur, or deep resounding roll, or raving roar of running water, is of all sounds my ears ever hear now the most homely,’ he writes in his island prison of Van Diemen’s Land. ‘Nothing else in this land looks or sounds like home. The birds have a foreign tongue—the very trees whispering to the wind, whisper in accents unknown to me . . . they can never, never—let breeze

pipe or zephyr breathe as it will—never can they whisper, quiver, sigh, or sing, as do the beeches and the sycamores of old Rosstrevor.’ Or again, whilst he was still a convict in a hulk at Bermuda, the old memories find vent. ‘This thirteenth of September,’ he writes, ‘is a calm, clear, autumnal day in Ireland, and in green glens there and on many a mountain-side, beech leaves begin to redden, and the heather-bell has grown brown and sere; the corn-fields are nearly all stripped bare by this time; the flush of summer grows pale . . . and the rivers as they go brawling over their pebbly beds, some crystal bright, some tinted with sparkling brown from the high moors . . . all have got their autumnal voice, and chide the echoes with a hoarser murmur, complaining (he that hath ears to hear let him hear), how that summer is dying and the time of the singing of birds is over and gone. . . . Well known to me by day and by night are the voices of Ireland’s winds and waters, the faces of her ancient mountains. I see it, I hear it all—for by the wondrous power of imagination, informed by strong love, I do indeed live more truly in Ireland than on these unblessed rocks.’

It has seemed worth while to dwell on this love of nature—especially of Irish nature—since it is an incongruous trait in a man like Mitchel, hard-headed and practical, with nothing of the dreamer or the poet about him; and because also it is only by a comprehension of the affection he bore to mountain and glen and stream of his native land, that the bitterness of a life passed in banishment

can be measured. Almost one can hear him say with another Irish exile, St. Columba, 'Better is death in Ireland than here endless life. . . . My heart is broken in my breast. If sudden death surprises me it is my love for the Gael which is the cause.'

All things considered, then, it may be said that up to the time of his taking an active part in politics, Mitchel's life had passed away pleasantly.

'As he played with his children,' wrote John Martin's sister afterwards, speaking of this period, 'he was the very type of a happy man. All the good days were before he threw himself into political life.'

It was in the year 1845, when Mitchel was thirty, that those days were to end. Two years earlier, by his action with regard to the proclamation by the Government of the meeting to be held at Clontarf, O'Connell had practically committed himself to a policy of non-resistance. There was plainly room for the creation of a party holding a different creed—the creed that if repeal was not to be won by legal and peaceful methods, others might be rightfully employed. It was with this party—the party of Young Ireland—that Mitchel was to throw in his lot.

Of signs foreshadowing his future destiny there had hitherto been singularly few.

If he loved Ireland, so did others. He resented her wrongs; but thousands resented them as deeply and perhaps more loudly; the hatred of hundreds of thousands for England was no less



strong. If his sympathies had always been engaged on the national side, he had been content to give them little active expression. In the summer of 1843, however, there were indications that the attitude of a looker-on at the struggle then going forward would not long continue to content him.

About a year earlier he had become acquainted with Thomas Davis, leader of the Young Ireland party, and, to use Mitchel's own words, 'the friend who first filled his soul with the passion of a great ambition and a lofty purpose.' From that time the 'good days' of quiet and domestic happiness were numbered. When the disaster of Davis's death fell upon the little band of whom he had been chief, Duffy, editor of the *Nation*, to which Mitchel had been for some time a contributor, proposed to him to give up his profession, come to Dublin, and take the place of the dead leader upon the staff of the paper. Thus called upon to make a deliberate choice, Mitchel did not hesitate. He at once accepted the offer, and became from that time a prominent figure in the ranks of Young Ireland.

Most of the decisions of men's lives are taken with but little apprehension of their importance or scope, nor was Mitchel in particular likely to be over careful in counting the cost before he embarked on an adventure. Had he done so, and had he divined the consequences of his action, though it might have given him pause, it is not probable that he would have been turned from his

purpose, or that he would have shrunk from the sacrifice involved. At the moment, however, there was no reason to anticipate that the price he would be called upon to pay would be what it eventually proved, nor was there any obvious connection between the assistant-editorship of a nationalist newspaper and the convict's cell.

Of Mitchel's spirit in carrying on his work during the next two years, a letter written to John Martin in the spring of 1846 may be accepted as an indication. 'I think it highly important,' he said frankly, referring to the tone of the *Nation*, 'to keep up an exasperation of feeling against the English Government.' He was an enemy, open and avowed, of the dominant country and of its ways and methods of dealing with Ireland, and was bitterly opposed to the principles advocated by O'Connell and his party. During these years of want and famine his conviction that the ultimate appeal must be made to a force other than moral, was doubtless becoming more and more strong; nor did the longing he felt to stir a people, apathetic through misery, to a more warlike spirit ever give place to more timid, or as some might say, saner counsels. It was a longing only rendered more pronounced by the absolute failure of the abortive insurrection of 1848, cited by O'Connell's son as chastisement for the revolt of Young Ireland against the policy enjoined by the *Liberator*. Each fresh proof of the incapacity of the Irish people, in the condition to which they had been reduced, to oppose an armed resistance to

tyranny, only served to increase his detestation of the teaching they had received. His views found forcible expression in the *Jail Journal*. 'Because the Irish have been taught peaceful agitation in their slavery, *therefore* they have been swept by a plague of hunger worse than many years of bloody warfare. Because they would not fight they have been made to rot off the face of the earth, that so they might learn at last how deadly a sin is patience and perseverance under a stranger's yoke. . . . Tell me not of O'Connell's son. His father begat him in moral force, and in patience and perseverance did his mother conceive him. I swear to you there are blood and brain in Ireland yet, as the world one day shall know. God! let me live to see it.'

Such was the language used by Mitchel in his prison cell, when he was free to give expression to his sentiments without reserve or restraint. Though in terms of less violence, he had sought, during the two and a half years of his active share in the struggle, to impress the lesson of armed resistance upon his starving countrymen. It is only fair to bear the fact in mind that if England, as can scarcely be denied, took advantage of every means at her command, just or unjust, to remove Mitchel from the scene of action, she was using those means in order to clear from her path an enemy, bitter, irreconcilable, and avowed.

In the meantime it is impossible not to believe that to a man of Mitchel's temper there must

have been much to enjoy in the fight of which he had become one of the leaders. In 1846 he paid his first visit to London, as a member of a deputation sent to express to Smith O'Brien the sympathy of the '82 Club, on the occasion of his consignment to a cellar in the House of Commons in consequence of his refusal to serve on a Select Committee. It was at this time that Mitchel first met the writer for whom his admiration, in spite of discordant opinions, was so profound. Nor did a nearer view of Carlyle dispel his enthusiasm, even though the views expressed by the philosopher in regard to Irish questions were stigmatised by the man who knew Ireland personally and by heart as 'strangely and wickedly unjust.' Yet, 'to me his talk,' he wrote to Martin, 'seemed like the speech of Paul or Chrysostom, and his presence and environment royal and almost Godlike.'

In the summer of 1846 came the open breach between O'Connell and the Young Irelanders, following upon the alliance formed by the Liberator with the Whig Government, and the adoption by the Repeal Association of the Resolutions condemnatory of physical force. Into the question of the rupture there is no space to enter here. That a determination existed on the part of those by whom the proceedings of the Association were directed to drive out of it the newer party, will scarcely be denied. That object was accomplished, and henceforth the two forces worked apart, each on its own lines.

For the present, banished from Conciliation Hall,

the work of the Young Irelanders was mainly confined to the propagation of their doctrines through the *Nation* newspaper and other literary channels. But whilst labouring strenuously at this object, Mitchel collected round him a pleasant band of comrades, and enjoyed a large amount of social intercourse. To give a list of those who were more or less intimately associated with the set thus brought together would be to name many of the men most eminent in Irish literature. Carleton, Ferguson, Kenyon, O'Hagan, Clarence Mangan—all these came, with many more; and 'to us younger men,' wrote a frequenter of Mitchel's house, 'it seemed impossible that men so brilliant and genial could be wrong or fail.' Once, too, a more distinguished visitor was Carlyle himself. 'For two evenings,' wrote Mitchel to John Martin, 'we have heard his prophesyings (by "we" I mean Young Ireland generally) to our infinite contentment.'

Whatever occasional relief might be thus afforded from the serious business of life, nevertheless with the people dying by thousands of famine and typhus, the sombre background must have been ever present, and the unceasing endeavour to find a cure for the prevailing misery was becoming more absorbing every day. In the opinion of Mitchel and his comrades the only hope of an amelioration in the deplorable condition of the country lay in a Repeal of the Union by which it had been brought about, and for the furtherance of that object the Irish Confederation was founded in January 1847 by

the party of Young Ireland. This body, though far from proposing a present or immediate resort to physical force, did not in the abstract condemn an appeal to it, and was therefore in distinct opposition to the principles advocated by O'Connell. The Liberator himself was removed from the scene in May of the same year, when he died, leaving the Irish misery at its height. Whether or not much was to have been hoped from his presence in Parliament, it was increasingly clear to Mitchel and his party that, without it, little could be expected from Parliamentary representation. 'We have neither the men, the money, nor the franchises,' wrote Mitchel to Smith O'Brien, himself an Ishmael amongst the allies of the Whig administration. It was nevertheless his opinion that it remained open to the landlords to make honourable terms and to save themselves and the nation together. So he told O'Brien in a letter in which, re-reading it, he adds that he found he had expressed himself with more revolutionary vehemence than he felt—*as yet*.

All through those months of the country's agony the Young Irelanders carried on their uphill fight. Though O'Connell himself was gone, the prestige of a great name was still opposed to them, and the dead Liberator was even now stronger than his living rivals. At the general election, not a single member of the newer party, except Smith O'Brien, was returned to Parliament. With the landlords on the one hand, distrustful and suspicious, and upon the other the mass of the people

still swayed by the magic of O'Connell's name, they stood alone.

But events were moving rapidly on. By the end of the year, the landlords had declared definitely against repeal; a fresh coercion Bill had been passed, and Mitchel, with many others of his countrymen, was finally strengthened, settled, and established in irreconcilable hostility to English rule. 'A kind of sacred wrath,' he afterwards wrote, 'took possession of a few Irishmen at this period. They could endure the horrible scene no longer, and resolved to cross the path of the British car of conquest, though it should crush them to atoms.'

One of the first results of the fresh development of Mitchel's views was the accentuation of the divergence of his opinions from those of Duffy, and his consequent retirement from a paper in which he was no longer at liberty to give expression to his true sentiments. His opinions were extreme; his doctrine illegal. It was, Mitchel himself admitted, natural enough that Duffy, as proprietor, should not be willing to incur the risk of prosecution for the sake of views he did not share. The two, therefore, parted company, Mitchel deciding, after an interval of two or three months, to start a newspaper of his own, where he would be at liberty to inculcate upon his readers the course of action promising, as he was persuaded, the only hope of salvation for the unhappy people.

Thenceforth his teaching was explicit. He con-

fessed himself weary of constitutional agitation. He exhorted the nation to arm, and to prepare, should opportunity offer, to make use of it. Looking backward, and learning his lesson from the past, he declared himself to differ on one point from the rebels of 1798. He did not believe in the possibility of a secret organisation. He was prepared to act without disguise and in the light of day. 'No espionage,' he told Lord Clarendon, in an open letter printed in the columns of the new organ, *The United Irishman*, 'no espionage can tell you more than we will proclaim once a week on the house-tops.' While actual warfare remained as yet impracticable, he counselled passive resistance to what in Ireland went by the name of law ; and, coming to practical details, he desired that when—as would inevitably follow should this policy be pursued—collisions occurred, they should take place in streets rather than in the open country. Street fighting, he considered, afforded most prospect of success.

Such was the advice he offered to the wretched victims of British misrule. It is difficult to believe that, at least in his calmer moments, Mitchel, hard-headed and sagacious, can have anticipated that, in the then condition of the Irish people, the policy he advocated could be carried out. If those are right who are of opinion that he propounded it, not merely as the sole alternative to death by starvation but as offering a fair chance of success, it is hard to account for his blindness. On the other hand, when a dying man is given up by



medical science it is permissible, as a last chance, to make use of dangerous remedies ; and from this point of view, Mitchel may have been justified. His own words, written twenty years later, are the best apology, if one is needed, for the attitude he took up at this juncture. 'True,' he said, 'it was an act of desperation. But remember that in those very same days the people were actually perishing at any rate, dying by thirty thousand per month, and by a death far more hideous than ever was dealt by grape, or shell, or sabre. "Oppression maketh the wise man mad"; and the oppression at that moment was so bitter and relentless that no calmness remained for calculating chances.'

One more factor in the case should be borne in mind. It was 1848. The beacon fires of revolution were alight throughout Europe. Was it to be expected that Irishmen should escape the general infection and remain passive prisoners—not of hope? If nothing more was possible, might they not at least fill the trenches so that others might pass on to victory? Men had given their lives in less noble causes ; nor was Mitchel likely to grudge the cost.

His paper was launched with astonishing success. If many of the men with whom he had been working dissociated themselves, for a time, from the extreme course he advocated, others had fearlessly thrown in their lot with him, with the result indicated by Lord Stanley's speech in the House of Lords. 'This language,' he said, speaking of the first number of *The United Irishman*, 'will tell, and

I say it is not safe to disregard it. These men are honest; they are not the kind of men who make their patriotism the means of barter for place or pension . . . they are rebels at heart; and they are rebels avowed, who are in earnest in what they say and propose to do. My Lords, this is not a fit subject, at all events, for contempt.'

Lord Stanley was right. It is only necessary to be acquainted with the ability marking *The United Irishman* to concur in his assertion. A man who was so great a master of language as Mitchel was no force safely to be disregarded. The terms of the challenge to the Government contained in the letter to Lord Clarendon, then Lord Lieutenant, already quoted, and his description of the past year of famine, would alone be sufficient to set him far apart from the common journalist: 'You could weep,' he says, speaking of those days of misery and desolation, 'but the rising curse died unspoken within your heart, like a profanity. Human passion there was none, but inhuman and unearthly quiet. . . . It seemed as if the *anima mundi*, the soul of the land, was faint and dying, and that the faintness and death had crept into all things of earth and heaven.'

One more quotation from the same paper, whilst again demonstrating the power of appeal possessed by Mitchel, will likewise show that he left no choice to the English Government but to strike.

The news had reached Ireland of the rising in Paris. A Republic had there been proclaimed. It was a presage of hope for all lands.

‘Oh, my countrymen, my countrymen,’ cried Mitchel, ‘look up, look up. Arise from the death-dust where you have long been lying, and let this light visit your eyes also, and touch your souls. . . . Clear steel will, ere long, dawn upon you in your desolate darkness ; and the rolling thunder of the people’s cannon will drive before it many a heavy cloud that has long hidden from you the face of heaven. Pray for that day, and preserve life and health that you may worthily meet it. Above all, let the man amongst you who has no gun, *sell his garment and buy one.*’

The British authorities could scarcely have refused to take up the challenge. Their retort was made on the 20th of March, when Mitchel was called upon to give bail to stand his trial for sedition.

O’Brien and Meagher were charged together with him. The attitude of the Young Irelanders, dissevered for a time from that of Mitchel, had undergone a change so soon as the Paris revolution had seemed to afford fairer grounds for hope of success in the event of his policy being carried out ; and the tone of the speeches made by others of the party had harmonised sufficiently with that adopted by Mitchel to cause them likewise to be included in the attack of the Government. None of the three first called to account had so much as attempted to disguise the fact that they were awaiting opportunity alone to make their appeal to force. It would have been too much to expect of any dominant country that it should leave them time to mature their plans.

The trials of O'Brien and Meagher preceded Mitchel's, and in the eyes of the Government resulted in a signal miscarriage of justice. On each jury a single repealer had been permitted to remain; and in both cases he had refused to concur in a conviction. The defeat of the authorities was celebrated by bonfires throughout the country. When the juries by which Mitchel, on the several counts, was to be tried were struck, it was evident that the result would be the same. The Government, therefore, decided upon a change of tactics. The pending prosecution for sedition was dropped; and the same day Mitchel was arrested on a charge of treason-felony, chiefly based on a series of letters—treasonable enough, it cannot be denied—to the Protestants of the north.

The question, however, of the means to be taken in order to secure a conviction still remained undetermined, and was a serious one. The Whigs had denounced jury-packing, Lord Russell in particular having declared his disapproval of the practice. But the situation was too critical for the indulgence of delicate scruples; and the time-honoured method of ensuring success was resorted to. Every one of the nineteen Catholics included in the panel was challenged by the Crown, and the jury selected to try the national leader was in the end exclusively composed of Protestants.

Such being the case, the result could be securely counted upon. A verdict of guilty was returned, and sentence of fourteen years' transportation was pronounced upon the prisoner.

In the speech made by Mitchel after his conviction he showed himself at his best. It was his hour of triumph, and if it was heavily paid for during the long years which were to follow, he was not the man to grudge the price. Three months ago, he told the court, he had promised those who held the country for the English that either he would force them, publicly and notoriously, to pack a jury to convict him, or else that he would walk, a free man, out of the court and provoke a contest in another field.

‘My Lords,’ he added, ‘I knew that I was setting my life on that cast; but I knew that in either case victory would be with me; and it is with me.’

As he held up to contempt the methods by which his conviction had been obtained, murmurs of applause, repressed by the police, made themselves audible. Baron Lefroy also broke in to protest against the repetition of the very offences of which the prisoner had been convicted. But Mitchel was not to be put to silence.

‘I do not repent,’ he said, ‘anything I have done, and I believe the course which I have opened is only commenced. The Roman who saw his hand burning to ashes before the tyrant promised that three hundred should follow out his enterprise. Can I’—his eyes travelling over those who stood by—‘can I not promise for one, for two, for three?’

He was interrupted again, by passionate cries of response.

‘Promise for me—and me—and me, Mitchel,’

came from the crowd around him. Mitchel did their bidding.

‘For one, for two, for three?’ he repeated proudly. ‘Ay, for hundreds!’

He had reason to be proud. A convicted felon, under a sentence many might have considered worse than death, men were yet ready, eager, at his word, to pledge themselves to follow in his steps, and to fling their defiance in the very face of the power now crushing him. The seed he had sown was already bearing fruit. Whatever might befall him thereafter, his work had not been done in vain.

It was the culminating point of his life. To that crisis all that had gone before had led up. To it in days to come he must have looked back as men look back upon the moment when vitality has reached its utmost limit of intensity. As, amidst the excitement he had produced, he was led away to begin his long captivity, his active career as an Irish revolutionist ended.

He lived on. For twenty-seven years his days were prolonged; passed in the first place as a convict; afterwards, with brief intervals, spent in the United States of America. There he took his part in what went on around him, finding occupation in journalistic and literary work. To some men it would have been an existence, if not satisfying, at least tolerable. But the view taken by Mitchel himself of the life left to him is expressed in a letter written in 1857 to his old

friend and brother-in-arms in the national cause, Father Kenyon.

‘In the case of a man (*à grege me*),’ he wrote, ‘who has never but once been absorbed and engrossed and possessed by a great cause, whose whole life and energy and passion converged themselves once to one focus, and were then dissipated into the general atmosphere, who dashed himself one good time against the hard world, and was smashed to smithereens—in the case of such a fellow as this . . . his life, or the fragment of it, then and there crystallises, and he never grows older, but is truly dead and a ghost.’

The words, with the touch of exaggeration natural to the man, contain a truth. His experience, vivid enough, as a convict, can be read in the *Jail Journal*. The history of the years passed in America, of the tribute paid to him by his countrymen when he was elected by Tipperary to be her representative in Parliament, and of his return, only to find a grave there, to Ireland has also been told. But, in spite of all that came after, it was doubtless true that, for him, the intensity of life, the joy and excitement of living, came to an end on the day when he passed out of the court of justice—‘as places of this kind,’ to use his own words, ‘are called’—a convicted felon.

*Note.*—It may be well, though the incident belongs to a later period than that dealt with here, to notice an event of Mitchel’s after life which has

given rise to a certain amount of discussion, and has served to discredit him with some of those whose sympathies would otherwise have been enlisted on his side. This is the manner of his escape from Van Diemen's Land. Without entering at length into the question, one or two observations may be made. First, it is clear that Mitchel himself was fully convinced that, in withdrawing his *parole* in person, before a magistrate and with police at hand, he had complied with the demands of honour. In this view many men of stainless character concurred, Smith O'Brien being of their number. It will nevertheless appear to most unbiased judges that the very fact that the affair was managed in such a fashion as to make evasion possible, is proof that the spirit, if not the letter, of his pledge was broken. It may indeed be urged that, if a more scrupulous sense of honour would have chained Mitchel to his prison, a more scrupulous sense of honour would have debarred his opponents from using the means they employed to place him there. But to urge such an argument is, in fact, only to place Mitchel on a level with the men who had made the name of justice a by-word in Ireland. It is more to the credit of the man and of his cause to admit that the temptation to escape from a captivity to which he had been consigned by means of a trial destitute of so much as a semblance of fair dealing was too strong, and that he had not power to resist it.



## THE ROMAN TRAGEDY OF '48

‘THERE is a sovereign,’ wrote Lord Rosebery, ‘whose pretensions soar far above empire, who is as much above terrestrial thrones, dominations, and powers, as these in their turn are above their subjects. The Pope exerts an authority short only, if it be short, of the Divine government of the world.’

In the middle of the last century the representative of the claims thus—not without exaggeration—described, appeared in the eyes of friends and foes alike to have placed himself at the head of that movement variously designated as Reform or Revolution. Of the view taken by hostile critics of the attitude assumed by Pius IX. on his elevation to the Pontificate a pamphlet published in England and entitled ‘The Pope the future head of revolutionary Europe’ may be accepted as representative. ‘Who would ever have imagined that God would find out another General Lafayette,’ exclaimed a spectator of one of the popular demonstrations in his honour, ‘and that He would make of him a Pope!’

The brief space of time during which the head of Catholic Christendom stood forth as a leader of reform, and the place he occupied for that period

in public estimation, makes the story of what unhappily proved to be no more than an episode in his life a fitting one to be included in the present series of sketches.

It was in 1848 that Pius ix. made his great failure—a failure which, in the eyes of many, took on the complexion of a treachery.

He had entered upon a path without a just appreciation of its goal. Like the man in the parable, he had engaged in an enterprise without a preliminary calculation of its cost. And he turned back from the path, relinquished the enterprise. For the space of more than two years he had seemed destined to disprove Metternich's assertion that a liberal Pope was a thing inconceivable. He had presented to the world what to many men appeared the paradox of the head of the Catholic Church as a leader in social and political reform and as vindicator of the rights of the people; and new aspirations after liberty mingling with traditional loyalty to the Papacy, Italians had dreamt of an Italy regenerated and free under the presidency of the Pope. '*La dernière révolution Italienne,*' wrote Perrens in 1857, '*a été commencée à Rome par le sacré collège, le jour où les cardinaux ont élevé Pie ix. sur le trône pontifical.*' The hopes he had aroused proved an illusion; those who had indulged them were roughly awakened from their dream; and the reconciliation of the Church and the democracy was indefinitely postponed.

The tragedy of those two years is one of which

the full significance, blurred and confused by the bitterness of party spirit on the one side and the other, is often overlooked. To the chief actor in it may be applied words written in another connection—‘if good powers do regard these things, imagine the pity and the sorrow with which they behold the right man taking the wrong side, and the virtues of a man put into the scale of oppression and of cruelty.’ But that pity, perhaps inevitably, is rarely accorded by fellow-man; and the spectacle of a leader abandoning—in obedience, it may be, to an upright though wavering conscience—his colours in the stress of the battle, must necessarily fail to enlist the sympathy called forth by an honourable defeat. To most changes of front more than one element contributes; nor is it always easy to discriminate between a treachery and a weakness, a crime and a mistake. The act may be that of a brave man; it is sure to be branded as a coward’s; and it courts and invites the condemnation of the traitor.

There is yet another view of the matter. The triumph of reaction, when it came, could not obliterate the memory of the past. The importance of the vindication, however short-lived, of a principle should never be minimised. It can scarcely be exaggerated; for it is the earnest and the proof of a possibility. A match is struck; it burns itself out and the darkness may seem more impenetrable than before. But what has been remains the measure of what may be, and the significance of light, once made plain, can never be

forgotten. Forces heretofore deemed antagonistic have for a time worked together, and their ultimate fusion is no longer out of the range of possibility. A recantation is not an erasure. The idea of a liberal Pope—to quote once more Prince Metternich—can never again be wholly inconceivable.

The position occupied by Pius ix. on his election can only be understood when the attitude of the men who were at the moment directing the aspirations of the nation—aspirations, be it remembered, shared by the Pope himself—is taken into account. In the eyes of such thinkers as Gioberti and d'Azeglio, the unity of Italy was bound up with papal co-operation. Led by them, Italians had looked forward, even during the dark days of the reign of Gregory xvi., with a persistence as obstinate as it was strange, to a freedom which should find its centre at Rome, its inspiration in the Pope.

The fuel was ready to catch fire. By the measures with which the new Pontificate was inaugurated the match was applied; and when the news of an amnesty to political offenders went forth, the people went mad with joy and expectation.

In no case would hopes pitched so high have found easy satisfaction; and for the man called to the task of fulfilling them there were special difficulties in the way. At once head of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world, and sovereign of the Papal States, the duties appertaining to the double office, not necessarily

incompatible in theory, were in practice almost certain to conflict. In virtue of his cosmopolitan authority all Catholics, of whatever race or nation, had an equal claim upon his consideration, since in Christ was neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, Austrian nor Italian ; whilst at the same time, in respect of his limited territorial jurisdiction, he occupied the position of an Italian prince, bound to take thought for the temporal interests of his subjects. The result of the dual responsibility could scarcely fail to make itself apparent, either in the clogging and maiming of his spiritual rule, or in the crippling of his action as temporal sovereign. And with the difficulties of the position, at all times great, it was practically impossible to deal satisfactorily at a moment when the spirit of Italian nationality, crushed for a time by repeated failures to shake off the tyranny that oppressed it, was once more awake and in fierce revolt against one of the great Catholic powers of Europe.

It is possible that a worse man might have been better able to grapple with the situation. But upon Pius, conscientious and single-minded, whilst lacking in clearness of conception and aim, at once scrupulous and irresolute, and before all things a priest, the burden was not likely to fall lightly. 'Cut Giovanni into little pieces' was the saying of his elder brother, 'and from each one of them a priest will be born.' 'An honest priest but a bad prince' was the judgment passed upon him by Mazzini ; whilst Farini, his own official, bore witness that the pontifical and sacerdotal

conscience ever outweighed the conscience of the prince and the citizen.

A proclamation issued a year after his election gives the key to the condition of affairs. In that document regret was expressed at endeavours to impose upon the Pope maxims incompatible with his position as minister of the God of peace and 'father of all Catholics, to whatever part of the world they might belong.' The protest was doubtless not unjustified from the point of view of the universal spiritual Fatherhood. But Italians required at that moment, in temporal matters, a leader unfettered by obligations to foreign powers and hampered by no cosmopolitan rule.

Another point should be borne in mind. Fully grasped, it exonerates Pius from the charge of the deliberate abandonment of a course of action chosen and entered upon with open eyes. 'The Pope will march in reform *through principle* and of necessity,' said Mazzini, in October 1846. The King of Naples, on the other hand, bade his sons pray for Pius, on the score that he knew not what he did. It is likely that, for once, the tyrant was more clear-sighted than the patriot. Pius was generous, tender-hearted, and devoted. He desired to give to his people what in his opinion would be for their good, to free them from oppression and wrong. But it is probable, almost certain, that he failed to foresee the logical consequences of his own measures ; and that when he was hailed, not only as the saviour from intolerable bondage, but as the founder of a stable and liberal govern-

ment, he was placed in a position he had never contemplated, and to which he was not morally pledged. That such was the case may be his condemnation as a statesman. It is his exoneration as a man of honour. He had regarded his concessions as free gifts, not as the tardy recognition of inalienable rights. And this distinction must be kept in view if a fair verdict is to be pronounced upon the two years ending so calamitously for Rome and for the Pope.

The drama of those two years opened amidst the rapturous applause of the whole of nationalist Italy. The name of Pius was in all men's mouths. To him every liberal—whether Italian born or foreign—looked for the regeneration of the country. 'There is one more chance for Italy,' said a writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, 'and it comes from an unexpected quarter—from Rome itself. Pius ix. is a ruler resolute as Luther, yet gentler than Melancthon.' 'This time,' says a historian not biased in favour of the Papacy, 'it was not Piedmont, nor a constitutional sovereign, that woke Italy from her sleep, but the Pope. There can be no doubt that the signal for the liberation of Italy was in effect given by Pius ix.'

The statement, were it necessary, finds corroboration in the Milanese manifesto of that year.

'At the voice of the great Pontiff,' declared those responsible for the Revolution in that city, 'we were inspired with true citizenship, and arose more Italian than before. His name became the symbol of our hopes, of our creed.'

Through the length and breadth of the country the same spirit prevailed. In the very extravagance of the general fervour a presage of disaster might indeed have been discerned, since the iconoclast follows, in necessary sequence, the idol. But Italy was in no mood to indulge in sinister forebodings. In Pius she hailed the deliverer who was to lead her forth from Egypt and from the house of bondage ; forgetting, as men do forget when their hopes are high, that salvation is not won in a day ; forgetting also that it was not the captain of the host under whose guidance the Red Sea was crossed by whom Israel was led at last into the promised land.

Pius was well adapted by nature to appeal to the emotional side of the Italian character. Not only was he a member of an ancient family distinguished for its nationalist sympathies—traditions to which he himself had always remained faithful—but he was possessed besides of singular personal attraction. His beautiful voice and his oratorical power were gifts of no small importance to a popular leader. In his bearing dignity mingled with courtesy, grace with irony ; and in spite of the simplicity of his habits, he enjoyed to the full the advantage belonging to a man of the world. His private life was of stainless purity ; and his genuine piety, his lavish charities—stigmatised by a hostile critic as theatrical—his ministrations to the sick and poor, went to make up a personality commanding a devotion almost amounting to adoration from all classes and ranks. Nor,



in view of the charge of disingenuousness brought against him—a charge to which vacillation and weakness must always lay a man open—is it beside the question to note the special tribute paid to him by the great liberal, Montalembert, himself conspicuous for chivalry and honour, when he declared that it was impossible to reproach the Pope with the shadow of perfidy, or of bad faith.

But in whatever other respects he may have been calculated to appeal to the imagination of a race ever prone to idealisation, it was pre-eminently as the symbol of a united Italy that the heart of the entire population sprang to meet him. To the average Italian, says Italy's latest historian, 'a Pope's sympathy meant more than all the philosophy and idealism of young Italy.' A passionate loyalty, a personal allegiance, spread like wild-fire through the land. In Rome itself multitudes sought his nightly blessing; men and women wore his colours; Rossini composed the hymn in his honour afterwards used as a national anthem; Gioberti proclaimed the opening of a new era. Even aliens caught the infection. The panegyric of the organ of English Liberalism has been already quoted; the Sultan sent gifts; a Hebrew hymn in praise of the Pope was sung at a Jewish service; messages of sympathy came from America. The political exiles, returning home by virtue of the amnesty, crowded to the Sacraments, and supplemented the required oaths of fealty with additional and voluntary pledges. 'The hope invaded

men's minds,' wrote the old Carbonaro, Pepe, sardonically, when that delirium of joy had become a thing of the past, 'that liberty might be granted by a Pontiff, and that insurrections were, perhaps, not necessary.' Foes were reconciled; there was no leisure to remember old grudges; men were eager to forgive. In the English pamphlet directed against the Pope, already noticed, it is mentioned as a dangerous symptom that party feuds and private animosities were in abeyance, and that the antipathies formerly separating Italian states were set aside, if not forgotten.

It was one of those memorable moments in history when the brotherhood of man, from a theoretical maxim, vindicates its claim to be reckoned with as a practical force. For the time, in the sight of Europe, the enthusiasts of either camp, political and ecclesiastical, stood shoulder to shoulder, brothers-in-arms in the same cause.

Whilst this wild outburst of rejoicing, untempered by any misgiving, was taking place, it is curious to note the attitude of the greatest of Italian revolutionists, as he stood apart, leaning as it were upon his sword and looking on.

Mazzini was ready to join hands with all who, from whatever motive, might be counted upon to further the aims he had at heart. In great countries—so he told those who looked to him for guidance—regeneration should be won by means of the people themselves; in Italy it must be obtained through the action of princes. To the

Pope he accordingly appealed, some little time later, to conjure him to bring about the unification of the nation. With Pius, he said, it rested to make the terms God and the people—so often sundered—one. In the people let his confidence be placed; let him bestow his blessing on their cause, and trust to their loyalty and aid.

Thus Mazzini wrote, in a moment he himself characterised as one of expansiveness and juvenile illusion. Yet, prepared as was the great patriot to co-operate with each and all in the common interest, he was too clear-sighted to be misled for long together by false hopes as to the amount of assistance to be expected from the allies whom he sought to enlist in the cause. 'There are few who would go to the end,' was his conclusion, as he appraised and weighed the several instruments available for the approaching struggle. The true goal, 'therefore, of national aspiration should be left unsuspected by those pressed into the service and taking part in the movement; nor should they be shown more than the proximate step.

Such was the policy enjoined upon the initiate, if not by himself personally, by those who directed the action of his party. It was a policy excused, if not justified, by many treacheries in the past and dangers in the future; but if accepted as one upon which conduct was actually based, it may likewise be allowed to serve as a partial justification for those who deserted the flag so soon as its true significance became apparent to them.

For the present, however, all was going well.

In spite of opposition Pius, though standing at times almost alone, had persisted in carrying out his remedial policy. Not a single member of the Roman Curia would consent to sign the decree of amnesty; and on another occasion it is said that when twenty black balls recorded the opposition of as many cardinals to some proposed measure of reform, the Pope's response was to cover the urn containing them with his own white cap; observing composedly that all were now white, and that the reform was adopted. Taxes were remitted; the restrictions imposed upon the Jews modified; improvements in hospitals and prisons initiated; whilst political reform, more important to a people fired by the dream of liberty than even the removal of practical grievances, was promised. With the universal acclaim the first act of the drama may be said to have closed.

In the year succeeding the inauguration of the new Pontificate a certain modification of public sentiment was discernible. In the Pope himself the confidence of the people was indeed as unlimited as ever; nor had their love and loyalty suffered diminution. But he had been guilty of an error involving disastrous consequences. It was a mistake characteristic of his whole course of action, founded, that is, upon principles of mercy and justice, yet calculated to defeat his own objects and to neutralise the very reforms he had most at heart. He had absolutely refused to purge the civil service from the corrupt and reactionary elements bequeathed to it by Gregory's administration,

replying to remonstrances addressed to him on the subject that nothing but the clearest evidence of guilt would induce him to dismiss an official. He made, in fact, the vain attempt—that of an over-sanguine reformer—to pour new wine into old bottles. It was followed by the natural and inevitable result. Disobedience and insubordination paralysed the executive ; orders were falsified and the intentions of the Pope frustrated.

Protest was vain. So early as November 1846, his future minister, Minghetti, warned him in a private interview that of all reforms the reform of the *personale* of the administration was the most urgent. The Pope listened and took no action. Reform, in consequence, continued to exist largely on paper alone ; and a year after the beginning of the new Pontificate, Rossi, then French ambassador at Rome, was still reporting to his Government that acts, as well as promises and in-operative commissions, were needed. The people were growing impatient. To their belief in Pius they indeed continued faithful ; the Pope could do no wrong. But they had begun to discriminate with bitterness between himself and his advisers. '*Evviva Pio Nono solo*' had become their significant cry.

It was Austria who came involuntarily to the rescue, and at least retarded the coming rupture. Her occupation of Ferrara, in defiance of Pope and people alike, served temporarily to consolidate anew ecclesiastical and national sentiment. A common enemy is a powerful stimulus to friend-

ship, and brings about singular alliances. Garibaldi hastened to proffer the services of his legion; the King of Piedmont identified with fervour his own cause with that of the Pope; a fresh wave of national enthusiasm swept over the country, obliterating all minor differences; and Pius, as the victim of Austrian insult, was rendered more than ever an object of popular idolatry. The position he held in the hearts of the people is emphasised by the fact that in Naples, Parma, and Modena, the cry of '*Pio Nono ed Italia*' was prohibited by the authorities; and that even in Piedmont, during one of the intervals of timidity and irresolution to which the King was subject, a crowd assembled to listen to Rossini's hymn was dispersed by the police.

Yet, in spite of all this—in spite of the passionate persistence shown by the nation in clinging to their hopes—the union of Pius and his people was becoming, month by month, less a reality; and to the Pope himself it must have been growing clear that their aims were eventually doomed to conflict. Much, it was true, had been done. The municipality, the Council of State, the Cabinet, with its lay element, had all in turn been granted, each fresh concession eliciting new demonstrations of affection and gratitude. But it was evident that more would be demanded, and that the Roman people, with their bitter experience behind them, would not be content to leave their liberty practically dependent upon the generosity and goodwill of their sovereign for the time being. A

Gregory might follow upon a Pius, even as a Pius had succeeded a Gregory. The lesson had been too well learnt to be lightly effaced. And as Pius drew nearer and nearer to the limit he would be unable conscientiously to over-step, his position was becoming ever more critical.

That the approaching choice between obedience to the will of the people, and that higher obedience due from his point of view to a principle would be eminently painful is proved by the very reproaches levelled against the excessive value he is said to have set upon his popularity. Read for popularity the love of his people, and he may well have prized it. A throne is proverbially solitary, and to a childless priest its loneliness must necessarily be enhanced. To Pius the people's affection on the one hand, and his duty, as he conceived it, to his position on the other, were, likely enough, the chief factors in life; and regarding, as he doubtless did, the absolutism of the temporal power as a sacred trust which he was bound in honour and conscience to hand on unimpaired, it was becoming plain that the one would have to be sacrificed to the other.

It is fair to remember that he had never sought to disguise what would be the necessary issue of such a conflict. Rather he had repeatedly emphasised it. So early as June 1847, although reform was still promised, it was distinctly described as such reform as should be confined within the limits of the papal sovereignty and the temporal government—a government, it was pointed out, which

could not possibly adopt certain forms ruinous to that sovereignty or of a nature to impair its independence in the exercise of the primacy. Later on, he had also deliberately invited the criticism of the party of progress by the explanation that the Council of State had been summoned solely in order to assist the Pope in his sovereign resolution ; the explicit declaration being added that any other view of its functions would be as erroneous as to see in it the realisation of Utopias and the germ of an institution incompatible with the pontifical authority. Again, when giving public expression to his hopes of being shortly enabled to announce a form of government embodied in a constitution calculated to content the people, he did not fail to add that should his labours advantage religion, it would afford him more satisfaction as head of the universal church than as temporal prince.

In such declarations as these, repeated and reiterated, little desire is apparent to subordinate plain speaking to the conciliation of public favour. On the contrary, they go far to justify Rossi's complaint that the Pope had squandered a wealth of popularity—(' *le Pape a gaspillé un trésor de popularité.*') But the sacrifice can have been no light one ; more especially since that popularity, apart from its intrinsic value, was means to an end appealing to Pius with special force. A conversation is not without significance in this connection, in the course of which Montanelli, the Tuscan republican, pointed out to the Pope with uncourtierlike frankness that the *Vivas* of the crowd



were due rather to nationalist than to Catholic sentiment.

It was, Pius admitted, true; while he further added that for that very reason he preferred the greetings addressed, not to Pio Nono, but to the Holy Father—the first being a personal, the second a religious tribute.

‘What matter?’ was the Tuscan’s blunt rejoinder. ‘Pius ix. can do the Holy Father’s business wonderfully well. . . . The love of the people for Pius ix. will bring them back to the religion by which he is inspired.’

‘That,’ answered the Pope, ‘is also true.’

It is easy to discern in the dialogue matter for fresh perplexity on the part of the man who was beyond all things a priest.

Another scene—this time related by Minghetti, afterwards one of Pius’s own Cabinet—serves alike to epitomise the situation and to accentuate the sharp personal note by which it was dominated, as well as to demonstrate the curious, close relationship between Pope and people.

The Pope is standing on the balcony of the Quirinal; Rossi—the ill-fated Rossi—with Minghetti himself, looking on; while a sudden, tense silence has fallen upon the surging crowd collected below, at a sign that Pius is about to speak. ‘Bless, great God, Italy,’ he says in a voice loud and clear. Then to the hushed throng, already moved to emotion, he addresses something of the nature of an appeal. ‘Do not make demands upon me which I cannot, should not, will not

admit.' And Rossi standing by, shrewd, observant, and unmoved, makes his comment upon the scene. 'The Pope has had recourse to a heroic remedy,' he observes to Minghetti. 'But woe to him if he speaks again to the people. His *prestige* will be lost.'

So the winter passed away. Of the attempts to reconcile the irreconcilable by which the papal policy was marked the constitution ultimately conceded was one. Into its precise nature there is not space to enter here. Politically worthless as it was, it was received with acclamation; the tricolour was added to the papal flag; and the populace once more forgot that symbols are not realities.

The truth was soon to be brought home to them. Events were hurrying on. It was March 1848. The spirit of revolution was abroad throughout Europe, with an effect difficult, at this distance of time, to gauge. Even to men who had lived through those days and watched the attempts of nation after nation to shake off its fetters, it was afterwards hard—so one of them has said—adequately to paint the anxiety and the anticipation then filling men's souls. To popular desire nothing seemed impossible.<sup>1</sup> The people that had sat in darkness had seen a great light. It was soon to be extinguished. The saddest chapters of human history are the records of men's hopes, disproportionate as they are doomed to prove to the measure of fulfilment. The *coup d'état* in France, the triumph of reaction in Italy, were quickly to follow

<sup>1</sup> *Memorie*. Minghetti.

upon the boundless expectations of 1848. But, for the moment, in France, in Austria itself, and above all in Italy, to the lovers of liberty the world seemed full of hope.

To others than the lovers of liberty affairs wore a different aspect. To those to whom the old order of things had been dear, all that was in their estimation best worth preservation appeared in danger of being swept away in a common ruin; and to the view taken by such thinkers of Pius ix. in especial, an article in the *Quarterly Review* bears witness.

‘There is one among [Italian princes],’ says the writer, dealing with the events then taking place in the peninsula, ‘whose fault was the heaviest, and whose punishment has already begun. It is to Pius ix. that all this complicated evil is mainly due. . . . No man ever erred more grossly, or in a way more sure of speedy retribution.’ The Pope was the ‘dupe of his benevolent intentions, architect of his own misfortunes, traitor to his order, and slave of a faction.’

In France the *Journal des Débats*, inspired by Guizot, had expressed its opinion in terms as plain, if less violent. ‘Does the Pope indeed sincerely desire Italian independence and liberty?’ it questioned. ‘It is not possible; but were it so, it would become the duty of France to come to the aid of Austria, so as to stifle a Liberal movement which might cause the whole of Europe to rise.’

No doubt the spectacle presented by Italy was such as to incline those by whom revolution was

hated and feared to deal out harsh measure to the man they held chiefly responsible for it. The situation must have appeared strange and anomalous. Whereas in most countries infected with the longing for free institutions the people were ranging themselves in opposition to their rulers with the object of wringing from them by force the rights of citizenship, in Rome—long considered the stronghold of despotism, spiritual and temporal—there reigned a sovereign to whom the eyes of those Italians bent upon the liberation of their country from the yoke of the oppressor were turned with loving and reverent confidence, as to their leader in the coming struggle.

That that struggle was imminent could no longer be doubted. It had indeed begun. With the tidings of Vienna in revolt and of Metternich's fall, the whole of the peninsula had risen with one accord. The Milanese, in those five days which make one of the most heroic episodes of modern history, had driven out the foreigner, staining their victory by no such acts of vengeance for the atrocities committed by the enemy as might have been anticipated. 'Punish them with contempt and make an offer of them to Pius ix.'—so ran the proclamation of the Council of War. The people obeyed. For the name of Pius had not yet lost its magical power.

The language of the Provisional Government set up at Milan bears striking witness to the place he still held in the hearts of Italian patriots.

'The great cause of Italian independence, blessed

by your Holiness, has triumphed in our city,' they wrote, announcing their victory. 'In your name, Holy Father, we prepared to fight. Your name has been inscribed on our banners and on our barricades. In your name, almost unprovided with everything, but strong in the virtue of our rights, we opposed the formidable military organisation of the enemy; in your name old men and young fought and died; in your name we speak the joy of our hearts, and turn full of hope to the future, certain of not being deceived, as it has already received, O Holy Father, your blessing.'

Venice, Lombardy, Parma, were all in arms. Mazzini, coming home from exile, was received like a conqueror, the strong man weeping like a child as he watched a regiment, two thousand strong, of Italian deserters from the Austrian forces, march through the throng. Volunteers poured in. Naples itself was compelled to send an army north. Priests blessed the colours; the war was a crusade. 'In the name of God and of the Pope,' the King of Piedmont offered to the revolted provinces the aid that 'brother expects from brother, friend from friend.'

In Rome itself public spirit ran high. The downfall of Metternich had raised the excitement of the people to fever pitch. Demonstrations of all kinds took place. Joy bells rang, the Austrian arms were dragged through the streets and burnt in the Piazza del Popolo to the sound of a funeral march. The mob, filing past the Austrian embassy in procession, torches reversed and in dead silence,

repaired to the headquarters of the Jesuits, regarded as the symbols of absolutism, and there sang the *De Profundis* before dispersing. The ministry met and made preparations for war, bestowing the command of the troops hastily collected on General Durando, whose views were strongly nationalist. Cardinals and princes shared in the general enthusiasm, offering their horses for the artillery; women gave their jewels; a girl of Bologna, having nothing else to offer, cut off her hair and sold it for the common cause. Two of the Pope's own nephews were amongst the volunteers. And to Pius himself the eyes of all Italy turned.

The consequence to the Papacy and to the world at large, had he kept his place at the head of the movement, and directed its course, can only now be matter of conjecture. That the force placed at his disposal was one of almost incalculable volume, no man can doubt. 'The national sentiment,' said Rossi, as usual sagacious and unimpassioned, 'and its ardour for war, are a sword, a weapon, a mighty force. Either Pius ix. must take it regularly in hand, or the factions hostile to him will seize it, and turn it against him and against the Popedom.' The words read like a prophecy.

Never had man a greater opportunity. Never was a greater opportunity lost.

How far the Pope was himself carried away for the moment by the infection of the general fervour remains uncertain. His sentiments were through-

out the crisis in some measure an unknown quantity, furnishing a partial justification for the epitome of his history furnished by an opponent in the sentence, '*Mystification jusqu'à 1848: malheur après.*'<sup>1</sup> It is more than possible that he himself formed no clear conception of his desires and anticipations. At one time events filling moderate Liberals themselves with apprehension appeared to cause him no disquiet; and Minghetti records that at the news of the Revolution in Paris he seemed to feel nothing but satisfaction. His sense of proportion appeared disturbed; he invested trivialities with undue importance and failed to grasp the significance of serious events. In the general movement towards democratic institutions throughout Europe he saw the justification for whatever might have been regarded as rash in his own policy, and the solution of any doubt as to its wisdom. 'He felt his spirit relieved from a weight,' says Minghetti again. 'All he had done seemed a providential inspiration.'

In reading the proclamation issued by him on March 30, it is impossible to doubt that, for the time at least, he was in genuine sympathy with the popular sentiment. Coming at such a moment it was invested with special importance, and in the terms in which it was couched it is impossible to discover a presage of his future attitude. In the events so rapidly succeeding one another he discerned the Hand of God and the working of Divine Providence; and whilst expressing regret

<sup>1</sup> Petruccelli della Gattina.

for the excesses committed in some places, he mingled exhortation with encouragement. 'Remember,' he added, 'that righteousness alone can build, that passion destroys, and that He who adopts the name of King of Kings, entitles Himself likewise the Ruler of Nations.'

Such language was well calculated to appeal to the spirit of the people to whom it was addressed. Its effect was in fact such that every one, says Farini, as he took up arms, felt himself to be a champion at once of religion, of liberty, and of Italy.

Had the Pope maintained the attitude taken up in that manifesto, history might have had a different chapter. But not long after it had been issued a change was discernible in his mind. The thrill of excitement apparent in the March proclamation had been succeeded by agitation and doubt. Hopes, fears, scruples followed close upon one another, and struggled for mastery. The old fatal difficulty remained. A war, however righteous, ranging Catholic against Catholic, was, in the eyes of the man who owed equal duties to both, a civil war, to be averted if possible at all costs; and to the struggle resulting from his dual position his vacillations again bore witness. Had that position then been simplified by the severance of spiritual and temporal power all might yet have been well. As temporal prince he might have led his subjects with a clear conscience against the enemy. As spiritual ruler, free from the suspicion of personal aims and from national responsibilities, he would have been at liberty to concern himself alone with



the eternal interests of truth and justice. As it was he wavered between the two courses. He blessed the papal flag when the troops set out from Rome—as one witness narrates, with tears; he forbade them to cross the frontier—‘*Guardate la casa mia, ma non altro,*’ were his directions to the volunteers who had enlisted in the cause, not of the Roman States, but of a United Italy—and he disclaimed the action of General Durando when, giving his soldiers the Cross as their badge, he told them that the blessing of the Pope rested on their arms. Bewildered and perplexed by his variations, no man knew what to expect. Even his own Cabinet were distracted with doubt as to his intentions, their entreaties for enlightenment eliciting nothing more satisfactory than vague assurances.

What was the strain of those days of uncertainty to the men honestly endeavouring to serve both the national cause and that of the Pope can be gathered from contemporary records. Easter was close at hand, and Pius had withdrawn to the Vatican, his ministers being able but rarely to obtain access to him. And as it became known that an utterance was shortly to be expected by means of which the general suspense would be ended, the anxiety of those responsible for the management of affairs increased in intensity. Antonelli who, alone of the Cabinet, was in daily intercourse with his master, declared to his colleagues, whether truly or not, that his ignorance was equal to their own. When Pasolini succeeded in forcing his way into the Vatican, he received no

more than a general intimation that he and the rest of the Cabinet would be satisfied.

No further information could be obtained. To a declaration drawn up and signed by the ministers, as an expression of their unanimous and solemn conviction that the appeal to arms was necessary, and war the least of the evils threatened, no answer whatever was returned. Nothing remained but to await the development of affairs and to hope against hope that the captain of the ship would not, in the very stress of the storm, abandon his place at the helm.

At length April 29—the day when the allocution so anxiously expected was to take place—had arrived. To Recchi, another minister, Minghetti communicated his forebodings that that day would likewise witness the close of the attempt to maintain the union of the temporal and spiritual power; expressing his conviction that by the failure of the present Pope and ministry the impossibility of the task would be finally proved. By midday such apprehensions had been justified to the full. The famous allocution had been made public. The war to the prosecution of which every Italian Liberal was pledged was declared wholly abhorrent to a Pope who regarded with equal affection all peoples, races, and nations. The cause of Pius and the Papacy was virtually separated from that of United Italy. 'At last,' Cardinal Lambruschini is reported to have said, 'at last he has spoken as a Pope.' It was, from such lips, damning praise.

The blow had fallen. That same evening,

meeting in mournful silence, the ministers tendered their resignations to Antonelli, then—an untrustworthy and ambiguous figure, as warlike as any of the Cabinet in his professions—at their head.

‘You are happy in being able to go,’ he is said to have told his lay colleagues; ‘but this habit!’—indicating his own ecclesiastical garb. ‘Ah, Pius will have me in his service no more.’ As Pope, indeed, he would obey, but never again, as sovereign, serve him.

Face to face with Pius next morning, Minghetti justified the course he had taken.

‘The Pope,’ he says, ‘looked at me fixedly, with tears in his eyes,’ feeling, it may well be, the one severance the earnest of many to come; and so the two parted, the memory of his master remaining, in spite of all, ‘revered and beloved’ to the man who could no longer be his servant.

It is strange how blindly, and without any true conception of the importance of the occasion, men sometimes take the most momentous steps of their lives. The allocution of April 1848 unquestionably marked the turning-point in the career of Pope Pius ix. By some it was welcomed as the earnest of his return to paths of wisdom and prudence. To others it contained the death-blow of the hopes which had centred in him. The Liberal and national party was left to find another leader, and whether or not their cause was to triumph it would not be under his command. From whatever differing points of view the matter was regarded, all were alive to the supreme

importance of what had taken place—all save, it would seem, the Pope himself. He alone appeared unaware of the weighty nature of his own action. To the retiring ministers he expressed genuine surprise at the interpretation placed by them upon his utterance. The manifesto had hitherto been published in Latin alone; the language was obscure, and might have been misunderstood, so he suggested, showing a disposition to explain away the pronouncement which had caused so much consternation in the Cabinet. He likewise—a curious sign of weakness—laid stress upon the fact that, whilst denouncing the war, he had professed his inability to restrain the ardour of those amongst his subjects who should nevertheless follow the example of other Italians and take up arms.

The argument was a singular one, appearing as it did to reckon upon disobedience to neutralise his own policy. The ministers, however, clinging to the last spar of hope, consented to suspend action until the issue of the allocution in the vulgar tongue should have set its meaning beyond doubt. Whether or not it had been Pius's intention, even then, to withdraw or to modify the expressions inconsistent with his position as national leader will never be known. Some curious incidents would seem to point to the probability that it was so. A scene is recorded in which the Pope is set before us, walking in the gardens of the Quirinal with two of his ministers, of whom one, Pasolini, tells the story. The three, whilst the

evening darkens and the dews begin to fall, are waiting for the proofs of the manifesto in Italian. All is to be well and the ministers satisfied. Three times Pius sends to the printing-office, stating his intention not to leave the gardens until the proofs have been placed in his hands ; and three times the answer is returned that they are not yet ready. At last the ministers leave, without having seen the text. The next morning the confirmation, in the Italian language, of all the sentiments that had produced most dismay in the Latin, was legible to those who cared to read it. The influence of the counsellors who had the Pope's ear would seem to have availed once more, during the brief interval between his parting with the ministers and the time when the fatal manifesto was posted in the streets of Rome, to turn him from his purpose.<sup>1</sup> The die was irrevocably cast.

Crushing as was the disappointment, it was perhaps of less consequence than appeared at the time. Had the ministers succeeded in gaining a momentary triumph, in the modification of the Pope's language, their victory could but have been a passing and hollow one. Pius IX., in heart and will, had gone over to the enemy.

On that eventful second of May Rome was in tumult. A tempest of anger and sorrow swept over the city. 'He has deceived us,' cried the

<sup>1</sup> Pasolini states, on the authority of the Monsignor in charge of the printing works, that the proclamation sent to press was such as Pius had given his ministers to understand. Antonelli, however, had intervened, and had introduced corrections completely altering its significance.

patriot priests who had preached the crusade of independence. 'He has betrayed us,' repeated, with tears, Ciceruacchio, the popular leader. Though both the one charge and the other may have been undeserved, though Pius may have been guiltless alike of deliberate and conscious deception and of betrayal, the men who, in the bitterness of their disappointment, made the accusations, can scarcely be blamed. It was clear that Italy was to choose between allegiance to the Pope, with the sacrifice of the national ideal, or disobedience to his temporal authority. She was to be left to work out her own salvation independently of the captain upon whom she had counted to pilot the ship into the haven of peace and liberty. Fiorentina, in a contemporary pamphlet, epitomised the situation. 'Since Pius will not save Italians,' he wrote, 'Italians must save themselves.'

The end, from that day, can scarcely have been uncertain. What has been termed the permanent duel between temporal and spiritual power had reached a stage when the issue was no longer doubtful. The next six months contain the history of the agony of the people's faith in Pius as leader of the national hope. They are the history, in domestic affairs, of his vain and fruitless endeavours to reconcile the aspirations of the Romans after a guaranteed liberty with the preservation of absolute power on the part of the Papacy; in relation to Austria, of futile attempts to compass by peaceful methods what it was idle to expect her to yield uncompelled by force of

arms. It is unnecessary to dwell at length upon the steps leading up to the inevitable result ; upon the efforts of successive ministers to steer the vessel clear of the rocks ; or to enter in detail into the charges of duplicity brought against the Pope. As to these accusations it is sufficient to observe that when it is borne in mind that not only were his opinions frequently at variance with those held by his ministers, but that he had never acquiesced in the doctrine of a responsible Cabinet and in the consequent obligation of the sovereign to take no independent action, it is likely enough that communications to foreign powers from Pope and ministry should have been out of harmony. How far Pius was personally responsible for such dissonance is difficult to determine.

Thus that melancholy summer wore itself out. In its history one or two incidents, significant of much, stand out—in especial the annual procession in honour of the Pope's accession passing through the silent streets, empty of even the pageant-loving Roman crowd, and the blessing of Pius, only a year before their idol, descending upon a people cold, apathetic, and dull. Truly, if Pius had prized his popularity, he had not flinched from the sacrifice of it.

Or again, after the disaster of Custoza, there pierces, through the discord of opposing factions, the poignant note sounded by the last despairing appeal addressed by the Council of Deputies to the Pope.

'O Holy Father'—so it ran—'confide, confide in the representatives of your people . . . confide

in our religion, in the love we bear you, which is itself a religion. Succour us, succour Italy, in the name of God. . . . O listen, most blessed Father, to the voice of your devoted sons. O let it not be that, in the reign of Pius ix., the recollection of a disaster to an Italian army should weigh upon our consciences with remorse.'

The appeal, couched in such terms, must surely have struck home to the heart of the man to whom it was addressed. But it proved useless. Already the words will have sounded in Pius's ears like echoes from a past from which he had cut himself hopelessly adrift.

Ministry succeeded ministry, each in turn failing in the attempt to reconcile the hostile elements in the State. A few more months, and the end was come.

In September Count Rossi, sometime ambassador of Louis Philippe to the Papal Court, had been induced reluctantly to assume the direction of affairs. It was a wise choice. Had it been possible to save the situation, Rossi might have saved it. A Liberal, yet attached to the Papacy; upright and a man of honour, yet possessing '*l'art de paraître parfaitement obscur*,' a bold man and a strong one, he had many qualifications for the task. But one was wanting. He lacked the gift of inspiring love or trust. In dislike of the new minister all parties were agreed. By reactionaries he was hated as a revolutionary, by revolutionaries he was regarded as a foe. Stern, austere, and unsocial, he was unpopular with all, and he



disdained the arts of conciliation. As proud as he was fearless, he pursued his way, reckless of the fierce hostility aroused by his resolute determination to put an end to the prevailing anarchy and to reduce to order the condition of demoralisation and chaos prevailing in the city. And yet, had he had fair play, it was possible that he might have succeeded. But he was not given the chance.

On the 15th November Parliament was to meet. Sinister rumours were afloat. The mob had been infuriated by the measures taken to repress disorder, and the unpopular minister's life was said to be in danger. He had not been left unwarned. A priest waited outside his house to administer a caution; and the Count's impatient acknowledgments were heard as he passed rapidly on. To his colleagues he showed, with a smile, a letter containing a similar warning. It was likewise reported that in the Chamber itself he would be received with hisses; but he negatived, once more smiling, the suggestion that the ministry should on that account make their entry in a body. It would be better, he observed, that he should be hissed alone. And so, alone, he went to meet his doom. As he ascended the steps of the Chamber amid the hostile demonstrations of the crowd—to which it is said he again replied by an ironical smile and a gesture of contempt—he was struck down by an unknown assassin, and never spoke again.

It remained uncertain who had been guilty of the crime. But upon whomsoever the responsi-

bility rested, the death-blow had been given, not only to the Pope's minister, but—so far as it can be said to have been still in existence—to his liberal policy. Ten days later—an interval of tumult and wild disorder, of resistance on the part of Pius to the popular demands, enforced by arms, followed by his final acquiescence, under protest, in the concessions required of him—he had fled from the city; to return, when he did so, no longer as the symbol of liberty, but as the representative of reaction. His reign as a liberal Pope was over.

One scene more. As, in disguise and by night, he was passing through the palace on the way to make his escape, the taper carried by his single attendant was extinguished by a gust of wind; and the Pope, alone and in total darkness, was left to wait whilst his companion retraced his steps in order to rekindle it. That Pius was not free from superstition is shown by more than one incident occurring at this very time and regarded by him in the light of an omen. To the imagination of a man subject to such influences, did the sudden darkness overtaking his flight, one wonders, suggest any hidden significance? Did any doubt, at that last moment, cloud his mind? The question will never be answered.

The pioneers of a movement are easily forgotten. More especially in the case of a man who has outlived his own work—has indeed set his hand to the undoing of it—the permanent result of his labour is likely to escape recognition. Yet, in spite of

himself, the work of Pius remains. In spite of personal failure, of disappointment, of a wasted opportunity, he bequeathed to those who were to come after him the heritage of a vindicated principle and a demonstrated possibility. It was in the two years closed by the flight to Gaeta that the seed of which the harvest remains to be reaped was sown.

## MANARA AND HIS FRIENDS

A STRANGE and apparently inextinguishable element of hope, surviving disappointment after disappointment, is characteristic of the true revolutionist. Though apt at first sight to strike the student with surprise, it is in fact a natural and almost necessary condition of his existence. To embark on an enterprise without a fair expectation of carrying it to a prosperous conclusion is the act of a hero, or of a fool; and though members of each class are doubtless to be found in the revolutionary ranks, it is not of such men that the main body is made up, but of those who throw themselves into the adventure with the anticipation, more or less reasonable and more or less assured, of success.

The revolutionist is besides, for the most part, at the season of life when hope is easily cultivated, and even when his years are no longer few, as men count age, there is often to be found in him a survival of youth that time and failure have been powerless to destroy. It may chance indeed that these forces have acted in an opposite direction. 'The disappointed,' says Arthur Helps, 'are ever young.' Paradoxical though the assertion may sound, it is not seldom borne out by the presence of some at least of the features of youth,

by the restless discontent which spurs them on to fresh endeavour; by the longing to redeem, by one more cast of the dice, the wasted fortunes of life; and by the fact that the future continues to lie, an unconquered territory, before them.

Even those, however, who have learnt to reckon youth, moral or actual, amongst the necessary factors of any revolutionary movement, can scarcely fail to be struck by the exaggeration of this characteristic to be met with in the annals of the Italian struggle for independence. To the young, indeed, Mazzini had specially addressed himself when first he stood forth as the champion of liberty. To them he had looked as the main hope of the cause. They were to be placed at the head of the insurgent masses; their voice had magic power with the crowd; in them he discerned the apostles of the new religion he desired to inaugurate; and he gave singular expression to his faith when he excluded from the association of young Italy—save in exceptional cases—all above forty years of age.

The youth of its promoters continued, in a measure, to be characteristic of the movement in its later stages. Here and there, it is true, the figure of some veteran—of a Garibaldi or a Mazzini himself—stands out, doomed to survive generation after generation of disciples, and to watch, like the captain of a sinking ship, one subordinate after another gain the raft of death before he is himself released from his post. But, taken as a whole, the armies of deliverance are

largely made up of lads scarcely emerged from childhood.

In no instance is this more conspicuously the case than in that of the Lombard volunteers, who, beginning their brilliant career in the Five Days of Milan, ended it—many at least of the most distinguished of the band—some fourteen months later at the siege of Rome. It was at that melancholy time that Luciano Manara, Colonel of the Lombard Rifles and Chief of Garibaldi's Staff, was shot at the age of twenty-four, Enrico Dandolo when not yet twenty-two, and Morosini, the pure-hearted, saintly boy, died of his wounds before he had completed his eighteenth year. The episode containing their history might almost be termed the Children's Crusade of the Italian war of independence.

In the spring of the year 1848, the city of Milan, goaded to active resistance by the unexampled brutalities of the Austrian Government, was banded together in one vast network of conspiracy. There, as in every place throughout the length and breadth of Italy, men were preparing themselves for the struggle for liberty as men make ready for a holy war. God, the Pope, Italy, were the watchwords of the fight. The more cautious leaders of the movement were, it is true, endeavouring to restrict the agitation for the present to legal methods and thus to postpone a conflict which might well seem desperate. But it was becoming daily clearer that the inevitable

catastrophe could not be far distant, and that the rasher and more intemperate spirits would not much longer submit to restraint. There is a limit to endurance. After that limit has been reached the counsels of prudence fall upon deaf ears.

Amongst the most ardent of the Milanese conspirators were to be counted a gay little company of boys, students and friends, of whom the eldest was only nineteen. Of the number of this band, not more than ten or twelve, all told, were Enrico and Emilio Dandolo, two of the chief heroes of the coming fight, and friends and brothers in arms of Luciano Manara, slightly their senior.

The two were motherless boys, who had received their education chiefly at home, public schools being out of fashion at the time. Of Enrico, the elder of the brothers, there is little to be told save the story of his brief and gallant military career, lasting over scarcely more than fourteen months. Emilio, however, the younger by two years, lived to be something besides a soldier; and has left behind him, in his published writings and in letters to his family, evidence of the tender and sensitive nature of the boy who, at nineteen, was doomed to see his brother, his leader, and his dearest friend, all slain in the vain defence of Rome, he himself lingering on for some nine or ten years longer, attacked by a mortal malady, and haunted besides by the memory of that early experience, apparent in the moods of bitter melancholy to which he remained subject to the end of his short life.

When scarcely emerging from childhood, Emilio

had spent three years at a Barnabite College, where he fell much under the influence of one of the Fathers, to whom he remained devotedly attached in later years. By this teacher he had been first indoctrinated with the principles of that gospel of liberty which afterwards, with the love of his country, became the ruling passion of his life. Priests in those days were in the forefront of the battle, and children—Emilio was not more than twelve when he returned to finish his education at home—were politicians.

It had become the custom of the Dandolos and their comrades to assemble day by day in one of the gardens of the city, where the hours of daylight were passed in the practice of military exercises which should fit them to take their part in the coming struggle; whilst the nights were devoted to the preparation of bullets and cartridges. In holes dug in the soil a store of weapons, bought by the hoarded pocket-money of the confederates, was safely concealed.

No doubt there was no little impatience amongst the boyish recruits, as they practised their art of war under the shade of the trees and amongst the flower-beds. There must have been eager questioning, anxious observation of the signs of the times. Would the anticipated rising take place to-night, or to-morrow, or possibly next week? They were not, however, to endure any lengthened period of waiting.

A crisis was plainly at hand. In January 1848 the tobacco riots had taken place, resulting from the



determination of the Milanese, by abstaining from smoking, to put an end to a principal source of Austrian revenue. The vengeance of the Government, wreaked upon an unarmed and defenceless populace, had only served to aggravate the loathing of the city for its foreign oppressors, and throughout Italy religious services were held in memory of the eighty victims. By March the excitement, suppressed though it was, had reached such a pitch that Count Huebner, describing a fête given on the 7th of the month by the Austrian authorities, recorded his conviction that the dance had taken place upon a volcano. He was right. Ten days later the flames had burst through the thin crust of lava and the day of reckoning had arrived. On the 17th, news of the Viennese Revolution had given the last impulse to the popular enthusiasm, and Milan was ready to break into insurrection.

It must have been a day of wild excitement for the boy conspirators of the garden. That evening they met together at the house of Don Angelo Fava, the Dandolos' former tutor; and the following morning, Don Angelo himself leading the way, the lads started gaily for the Corso, with shouts of 'Italy,' 'Freedom,' and 'that name of Pius ix. at which God Himself then seemed to descend from Heaven, and to do battle for freedom and for Italy.'<sup>1</sup> The Revolution had begun.

The history of those Five Days is well known. Manara and his comrades bore their full part in it. Round the tricolour flag they set up the people

<sup>1</sup> Farini.

quickly rallied, the prudent counsels of older men giving way before the popular spirit. Fighting by day and keeping watch by night, those engaged in the desperate struggle lost, says Dandolo, all count of time. The enterprise might well have seemed hopeless. What expectation of success could be indulged by some dozens of armed citizens, ranged against twenty thousand disciplined troops; an untrained mob opposed to the generalship of Radetsky—strangely described by Huebner as ‘the most amiable of old men’—and his veteran soldiers? The amazing victory of the Milanese remains a monument for ever of the strength of a common hope or a common despair. David once more slew his Goliath. And wherever the battle raged most fiercely, there were to be found Manara and his little band of followers. On the last day of the fight their crowning feat was performed. Rushing forward amidst a shower of bullets, the tricolour banner in his hand, their leader gained possession of the house adjoining the Porto Tosa, put the enemy stationed there to flight, and gave admission to the armed populace who had collected without the gates to assist the combatants within the city.

Then, in the darkness of the night, the Austrian forces abandoned their post. The victory had been won. Milan was free.

The people went mad with joy. The foreigner had been expelled; the oppressor was driven out. One miracle performed, all marvels became possible. The conquerors imagined, with a con-

fidence as blind as it was strange, that their triumph was final, the Austrian gone for ever. So little necessary was it considered to take measures to secure the fruits of their success, that when Manara, with more foresight than the rest, undertook the formation of a corps of volunteers who should pursue the enemy and harass them in their retreat, not more than a hundred and twenty-nine young men at first responded to his appeal. Nor did even that small band form any just conception of the work before them. Light-hearted and gay, with a confidence almost incredible, except read in the light of the wonders already performed, the young soldiers took leave of their friends, assuring those they left behind them that a fortnight at most would witness their triumphant return.

To trace in detail the fortunes of the volunteers during the following months would take up too much space. The disappointment of the hopes which had been so high, with its causes, belongs to history. The vacillations, the hesitation, and the delays of Charles Albert allowed the moment to pass when a decisive blow might have been struck at Austrian domination. The liberation of Italy was put off for ten years. On the 5th of August, scarcely five months after the expulsion of the enemy from Milan, the city was once more in their hands.

The intervening campaign had opened with brilliant anticipations, justified here and there by temporary successes. So far as the volunteers are concerned, it is a story of splendid heroism, of reckless gallantry, of patient endurance of every

species of hardship, on the one hand ; on the other of that insubordination and jealousy which could scarcely fail to find a place in a body described by Dandolo himself, looking on with boyish disdain, as composed of alike the flower and the dregs of society, of patriots, nobles, artists, mechanics, and adventurers—of those who had sacrificed for the cause of freedom and of Italian independence all man has to give, and of those others who had engaged in the enterprise from the lowest of motives, all banded together in one incongruous and heterogeneous mass. To handle such a body with success might have taxed the skill of a veteran, and its inexperienced leader was more than once on the point of throwing up his command in the bitter impatience of despair.

In the history of the campaign pictures stand out here and there, serving as samples of the rest. Now it is Manara himself and a few friends who have taken refuge at Lasize, after the gallant and desperate defence of Castelnuovo. The steam-boat which should have ensured their escape, whether by mistake or treachery, has vanished, and the night is passed, in imminent danger of capture, under the roof of the parish priest ; one of the lads playing, on an old pianoforte, the familiar songs in honour of Pius ix., still the popular idol, while his companions join in the chorus, and the sky is lit with the flames of blazing Castelnuovo.

At another time, 'frontier-keeper' on the summit of a mountain, Manara is busy with

devices for sustaining the spirits of his troops, exposed to every kind of privation ; while on the mountain-top, under the open sky, mass is celebrated week by week, two fir-trees forming a gigantic cross over the rude altar. Or—a more melancholy picture—we witness the vain endeavours of the leader, amid the jeers of mutineers, to secure respect for the safe conduct granted at headquarters to a Tyrolese convoy.

So the months passed by. If Manara, as was perhaps inevitable in a commander of twenty-two, sometimes lacked the power to impress his authority on his turbulent and undisciplined troops, he was not wanting in qualities calling forth enthusiastic attachment, and Dandolo records that at one time scarcely a day passed that one or another of the volunteers would not risk his life by swimming the river separating the Italian forces from the enemy, in order to gather flowers for their young leader from a garden close to the Austrian camp.

Once only is it recorded that the captain himself, surrounded by men untrained in the very rudiments of military obedience, and prompt to enforce their will, was betrayed into a breach of discipline. It was a time of trial and anxiety. News of failure elsewhere had, in spite of all he could do, spread discouragement amongst his soldiers. Rumours of disaster, the more disquieting by reason of the uncertain nature of the tidings, daily reached the camp.

One subordinate after another would seek their commander with fresh reports of impending ruin.

Was he aware that it was said that they were surrounded, that defence would in that case be impossible, that the corps would be cut to pieces? And Manara would listen with what patience he could muster. What if it were so, he would reply; what had the volunteers expected when they engaged in the fight? Return to Milan? He would return there as soon as he received orders to do so, but not before.

Thus the endless, profitless, discussions went on, wearing to temper and spirits. Yet in spite of opposition and discontent, Manara still held out, doing what was possible to supply his troops with employment and to inspire them with courage. It was with this object that, on one occasion, a daring reconnaissance was organised, though it can have been with little hope of doing more than diverting the attention of the men from their grievances.

From the top of a hill, Manara himself directed the fire of his riflemen, the younger Dandolo standing at his side and holding the standard aloft, a mark for the bullets of the enemy.

‘Thinking it shame,’ he wrote afterwards with characteristic bravado, ‘for the tricolour of Italy to bow to the Austrian flag, I held it erect and as high as possible.’

They were still boys, playing their game of war, as before at an earlier date in the Milanese garden. But the forfeits were now become the lives of men. A retreat was effected barely in time to save the battalion from falling into the hands of the

enemy—a catastrophe, it must be remembered, which would have meant the death by hanging—or, ‘by a particular favour,’ by shooting—of prisoners who, denied by Austria the rights of belligerents, were treated as rebels when they fell into her hands.

Adventures such as these could only act as temporary expedients for quelling disaffection. The troops once back in camp and condemned to inaction, discontent again became noisy. The news from Milan was bad, and the men were clamorous to be taken home, the battalion assembling of its own accord to make the demand. Manara at length hesitated. Then, in the absence of any directions from headquarters, he yielded to the pressure brought to bear upon him. Possibly to the leader himself, no less than to his comrades, may have come visions of his home in danger, of his wife and little children—already at twenty-three he was a husband and father—with none at hand to protect them from Austrian brutality should the city once more fall into the hands of the enemy. However that might be, he was induced to consent to the abandonment of the post, Emilio Dandolo being dispatched to acquaint General Durando with the fact.

It was night when the messenger reached the General’s quarters. His face burning with shame, he made, in the bedroom of the Commander-in-chief, the communication with which he was charged. The answer came, stern and uncompromising.

‘Tell Signor Manara,’ said Durando, ‘that one day I shall write the history of these times, and that it is not upon my head that the infamy of certain events will rest. Signor Manara may go. Even without him I shall do my duty.’

The rebuke was faithfully delivered. The blood rose to Manara’s face as he listened to it. His response was prompt.

‘Take the standard,’ he ordered Emilio, his standard-bearer. Emilio obeyed. Then, standing in their midst, he addressed the soldiers.

‘The General commands me to remain at my post,’ he said. ‘I return thither. Let whoever has a sense of honour follow me.’

One by one the soldiers obeyed. When the roll-call was made, not a man was missing from the ranks. The single shadow which might have clouded Manara’s fair fame was averted.

But Milan, meanwhile, had capitulated. Once more she had fallen into the hands of the foreigner. Grey-headed men were weeping like children; young men were uttering curses; the work of the Five Days was undone.

It was the end of the first part of Manara’s career. Intrusted by the government of Piedmont with the formation of a battalion of Lombard Rifles, he set himself steadily to the task. To fight for Italy, wherever the struggle was to be carried on, was the object for which he lived. It was the body thus formed and trained that, upon the abdication of the King, he led to Rome, to fight a last battle in the defence of the republic there



set up. Manara, it was true, was no republican, but it was not a time when Italians could afford to dwell upon minor points of difference. Italy was their watchword ; her unity and independence their aim.

‘ You are Lombards,’ objected Oudinot, General of the French forces, when Manara, detained in the harbour of Civita Vecchia, demanded, on behalf of the soldiers he commanded, liberty to proceed to their destination. ‘ By what right do you meddle in the affairs of Rome ? ’

‘ And you, General,’ retorted the Italian, ‘ is it from Paris, from Lyons, or from Bordeaux that you come ? ’

Italy, as France, was henceforth to be a single nation, whatever might be the special political conditions of one or another part of it. On their first entry into Rome the young Milanese gave his followers the keynote of co-operation.

‘ *Viva la Repubblica !* ’ had been the words of the General of the Roman forces as he concluded his address of welcome to the newly arrived contingent.

The Lombards remained obstinately mute, refusing to respond ; till Manara, with ready tact, threw himself into the breach.

‘ Present arms ! ’ he cried. ‘ *Viva l’Italia !* ’

And ‘ *Viva l’Italia !* ’ shouted the soldiers in return. The situation was saved ; and though the Lombard battalion retained the badge of the cross of Savoy, and were nicknamed by the Romans the corps of aristocrats, there was in

future no lack of cordiality between the republicans and their allies.

How far indeed was Manara, now chief of Garibaldi's staff, from indulging in the jealousies which were unfortunately to be found amongst the various bodies banded together in the defence of Rome, is to be seen from his last letter to Mazzini. 'I have spoken to Pisacani' (chief of the staff of Roselli, the Roman General), he writes. 'We are perfectly agreed. Animated by the same spirit, it is impossible for petty jealousies to come between us.' Mazzini, for his part, expressed his opinion of the man with whom he had to deal when he wrote to him on June 22, while blaming the decision of Garibaldi as to a detail of the defence, 'but come, I have received your account and have nothing to say to it. I esteem you, and you begin to love me. I can swear that your thoughts are my thoughts.'

It is well to dwell upon the brighter features of that sorrowful time—a time of turmoil and passion, when men looked round them, and knew not whom to trust; when crimes were committed in the name of the noblest ideals, when religion consecrated oppression, liberty itself was not seldom the watchword of violence, and those who had been maddened by long years of wrong sometimes took the execution of vengeance into their own hands. Men who carry white banners should be careful how they stain them. Otherwise, to quote words of Michelet's, used in another connection, a terrible force is set in motion against

ideas themselves—that of ‘*la sensibilité qui marche sur les principes, qui, pour venger le sang, en verse des fleuves, qui tuerait des nations pour sauver des hommes.*’

No doubt, in the general confusion, the last drop of bewildered bitterness was added to the Roman defeat by the causes to which it was due. For Catholics to find themselves ranged against those who termed themselves the allies and defenders of the Pope was hard; but for men making their desperate stand on behalf of liberty to meet as their foes the soldiers of the very nation from whom they had looked for support, of the country which had led the van of revolution, was a paradox so strange that at first sight it was found almost incredible. Even when it could no longer be open to doubt that official Paris was against them, Italians refused to charge the apostasy upon the French nation or army. ‘Our young officers,’ wrote Mazzini to the enemy, ‘our improvised soldiers, our townspeople, fall beneath your fire, crying “*Viva la Repubblica!*” The courageous soldiers of France fall beneath our own without a cry, without a murmur, like dishonoured men. I am certain that there is not one amongst them who, dying, does not exclaim, as one of your deserters did to-day, “We feel as though we were fighting against brothers.” . . . If France represented, as we do, a principle . . . the valour of her sons would not fail when they have to face our young recruits.’

France, however, had for the time become, as

Jules Favre indignantly declared in the Chamber, *le gendarme de l'absolutisme*. Nor was it in fair fight alone that she strove to crush the new-born liberty of Rome. The treachery by which the doomed city was deprived of its last chance, in the refusal of Oudinot to ratify the agreement to a suspension of hostilities signed by the French plenipotentiary, and, further, by his evasion of his own concession of a truce, are facts too well known to need recapitulation. From the hour that the Roman outposts, trusting in the honour of the enemy, were surprised, the ultimate fate of the city was practically sealed. 'I consider Rome as fallen,' wrote Mazzini to Manara some three weeks later. It only remained for her defenders to sell her liberty dear. And in achieving that object none have accused the Lombard Brigade of backwardness. Despair, sapping as it does the courage of some men, only added to theirs. 'They clung to their standard without any hope of victory,' says Farini, writing not of their body alone, but of all those soldiers who, having drawn their swords in the cause of Italian independence, refused to sheathe them so long as the struggle was carried on in any part of Italy. 'They endured unheard-of fatigue; they suffered and died for their own honour, for the honour of Italy.'

It was not in courage only that the Manara Brigade, in especial, excelled. Manara, since the bitter experiences of his apprenticeship on the mountain heights, had mastered the art of command. Garibaldi has left upon record his verdict

that the Lombard corps, notwithstanding the youth of its commander, was the best disciplined body of soldiers in Rome. It was also—once more to quote the great leader—of ‘perfect bravery.’ ‘Our troops,’ he wrote, describing the struggle, ‘and particularly the Manara Brigade and the Italian Legion, fought the enemy several times breast to breast and hand to hand.’ Of Enrico Dandolo he recorded that his death had been the death of a hero. Many young soldiers in those days would have laid down their lives to win that tribute from his lips.

Emilio, the brother who survived, has given a detailed account, not only of Enrico’s end, but of other matters connected with the siege. It is a description full of pathos, enhanced rather than the contrary by the touches of boyish bombast recalling the youth of the narrator. The brothers, united by so close a bond of affection that, in the words of Emilio, it had seemed impossible that death itself should separate them, were seated together on the ground, sharing a piece of bread, when the order was delivered to the elder to lead his company to the attack of the Villa Corsini, then in the possession of the enemy. Starting up at once, Enrico obeyed. It was their last parting. As the little band, led by its Captain, reached the terrace before the house a shower of bullets thinned its ranks. Closing up, however, the survivors pressed on, and it was by another act of treachery that their defeat was ensured. ‘*Siamo amici*—we are friends,’ cried an officer, advancing at the head of his company, from

within. Dandolo, preserving to the last the faith in French honour which in Italians died so hard, had already given the word to his men to cease firing, when, at thirty paces distant, the enemy sent a volley amongst them, killing a third of their number. Dandolo himself was one of the victims. He fell, shot through the chest, and as a couple of his soldiers rushed forward to lift him from the ground their leader breathed his last.

Emilio, meanwhile, remaining where his brother had left him, watched dead and wounded as they were carried past, fearing each moment—in spite of that ‘vague and unwarrantable conviction’ that separation was a thing impossible—to recognise his brother amongst those borne by. At length the melancholy tidings were brought that the Captain had fallen, mortally wounded. And still Emilio, mindful of a soldier’s duty, remained, bound to his post. But not for long; for presently Garibaldi, passing by, brought release.

‘I heard him say, “I shall require twenty resolute men and one officer for a difficult undertaking.”’

Dandolo sprang forward to volunteer. His offer was accepted; the orders were given. Twenty of the bravest soldiers of his company were to be led once more to the attack of the Villa Corsini. It was to be taken at the point of the bayonet. The enterprise might well have seemed not only difficult but impossible. For a moment Dandolo was staggered by the lack of correspondence between the task assigned him and the means at his com-

mand for its performance. It was not, however, for him to point out its impracticability.

‘Have no fear, General,’ he replied. ‘They have, perhaps, killed my brother, and I shall do my best.’

He did it. Followed by the twenty chosen men, he rushed up the long avenue leading to the villa which was to be the object of the assault. When, their fire delivered, they were beaten back, not more than six out of the twenty remained.

Dandolo himself, wounded in the thigh, was carried to the hospital. There he lay, eagerly awaiting the result of the inquiries he had set on foot as to the fate of his brother; until, unable longer to endure the agony of suspense, he crept out to prosecute his search in person. For two long hours he dragged himself from corpse to corpse, examining each in turn. At length, from the window of a house from which the enemy had just been dislodged, Manara signed to him to enter. All who were present went sorrowfully out, leaving the two alone.

‘Seek your brother no longer,’ Manara bade him. ‘It is too late. I will be a brother to you.’

The shock of certainty was too great. Exhausted by his wound, and worn out by his long search, the boy fell fainting to the ground.

So the days went by, the carnage only serving to render the survivors more desperate in their resistance.

‘What are you doing here?’ Manara asked his quarter-master, aged eighteen, who, wounded

in his hand, had nevertheless reappeared at his side.

‘Colonel, let me stay,’ entreated the lad. ‘I shall serve, at least, to make up the number.’

His wish was granted. Struck by a bullet in the head, he did, in fact, go to make up the number of the slain.

One scene after another lends each its touch of vivid colour to the story of those days. Now a Pole—one of the brotherhood of liberty by whom no sundering limitations of race or nation are recognised—stands hurling stones, in default of ammunition, from the barricades upon the assailants below. Pointing, not without a touch of theatrical effect, to the Cross of the Legion of Honour upon his breast, won fighting the battles of the Republic in Africa, he bids the enemy direct their fire there.

‘Aim at my breast,’ he shouts, ‘aim at this Cross,’ and, struck by a ball in his head, ‘fire lower, traitors,’ he cries again, ‘fire lower,’ until the bullets did, at length, take effect, and he fell.

Men were known to remain on duty for two consecutive days and three nights, without intermission. But there are limits to what man can do. It was becoming clear that the desperate struggle was approaching its end. In the Manara Brigade there were many gaps, but still it fought on. Young Morosini, seventeen years old, and called by the battalion their guardian angel, had so far escaped. His lips moving in prayer, he had ever been in the thick of the fight, taking his part in



it with the coolness of a veteran. To him, as to many, it was a holy war. At the side of Enrico Dandolo when he had met his death, he had kept his place, exposed to the fire of the enemy, until his friend needed him no more. But his own time was come. On the evening of the 29th of June he parted for the last time from the unfortunate Emilio Dandolo, doomed to see one comrade after another disappear from the ranks and to remain behind to mourn them.

The rain was falling in torrents, night closing in in darkness and tempest. Dandolo, a mortal sadness oppressing him, like a premonition of coming disaster, had accompanied Morosini to his post. An hour before midnight, Dandolo's own duty calling him elsewhere, it became necessary for them to part. The two lads kissed each other in the darkness, the elder entreating Morosini to do what lay within his power to preserve himself for those who loved him.

His friend's forebodings were justified. That night, or rather in the early morning of the fatal 30th of June—the day when Manara also met his death—Morosini fell, struck by a bullet. Rushing forward, four of his soldiers succeeded in lifting him on to a litter and carrying him out of the fight. But on their way to the Villa Spada they were met and stopped by a party of the enemy.

'*Qui vive ?*' cried the Frenchmen.

'*Prisoniers,*' replied Morosini faintly.

The men, however, suspicious of a fraud, pressed on ; when the boy, raising himself from his blood-

stained litter and already mortally wounded, drew his sword and defended himself, until compelled by a second wound to give up the fight.

Moved by his gallantry, the French soldiers carried him to their ambulance; and thirty hours later he passed quietly away, serene and calm, '*il più fanciullo di tutti noi*,' as Dandolo records.

In the Villa Spada, meanwhile, to which his men had attempted to carry Morosini, Manara and some thirty of his faithful followers had barricaded themselves. The defence of the place had already lasted a couple of hours when, as he stood by the side of his chief, Dandolo was, for the second time, wounded, though on this occasion only in his arm.

'*Per Dio*,' exclaimed the Colonel, 'are you always to be the one to be struck? Am I to take nothing away from Rome?'

His jealousy was premature. A few minutes later, as he stood reconnoitring the position from the window, he was shot through the body.

From the first it was clear that the wound was mortal.

'I am a dead man,' he said to Dandolo. 'I commend my children to you. . . . Do not leave me,' he entreated, letting his hand fall into his friend's, as they carried him through a broken window to the ambulance in the open country beyond. 'Let me die in peace. Do not move me.'

The battle was still going on. All around the air was filled with the sounds of strife. But Manara's last fight was over, and possibly the proportionate value of earthly issues was already

undergoing for him that notable change effected by the approach of death.

With Emilio Dandolo too the duties of the soldier had given temporary place to those of the friend. It was clear that these last would not long detain him.

‘Think of the Lord,’ said the convent-bred boy, bending over the dying man and striving to prepare him for the *gran passaggio*.

‘Oh, I do think of Him,’ was Manara’s answer, ‘and much.’

His desire for the Viaticum was granted. From a Capuchin he received the Sacraments of the dying. Afterwards there was silence; until, rousing himself, he spoke of his little sons, bidding his friend bring them up in the love of religion and of their country. Then, as Dandolo’s tears fell, thick and fast, ‘It grieves you that I die?’ he asked, adding simply, ‘I, also, am sorry. . . .’

One wish expressed by him could not, alas, be gratified. It was that Morosini, himself dying, though Manara was ignorant of the fact, at the time in the camp of the enemy, might be near him in this last hour. For the rest, he was at peace with all, causing his orderly to be summoned, that he might obtain his forgiveness for any impatience he had shown him.

Nor was he, in his agony, forgetful either of the comrade who had preceded him to the unknown country, or of the brother who was left to mourn alone.

‘*Saluterò tuo fratello per te, n’è vero?*’ he

promised Dandolo. Then, as the pain grew intolerable, 'O Bertini,' he implored his friend and surgeon, 'let me die quickly—I suffer too much.'

Faint from grief and exhaustion, Emilio, the narrator of the scene, lost consciousness. When he recovered it, the end was at hand.

Four hundred men, the remnant of the nine who had made up the regiment, haggard and worn and unofficered, followed their boy-colonel to his grave, and Ugo Bassi, the Barnabite friar, Garibaldi's friend, pronounced the funeral oration. Of Enrico Dandolo's company there remained no more than ten or twelve men, all told, nor was one lieutenant left to lead them. The bier was covered with a blood-stained tunic, and a hundred wounded soldiers dragged themselves painfully after it.

Out of the quartette of friends made up by Manara, the two Dandolos, and young Morosini, Emilio Dandolo alone survived the siege of Rome. For a few years his life was prolonged, haunted by the memory of the scenes through which he had passed, and shadowed by a melancholy never, for long together, dispelled. Then, falling a victim to gradual decline, he too died. Till the last he had cherished the hope of being permitted to strike another blow for Italy, and had clung to the possibility that he might take part in the fresh struggle for liberty then impending.

'Do what you will with me,' he implored, 'so that I am able to mount a horse in two months.'

But it was not to be. At twenty-eight he went to swell the number of those whose warfare is over.

Suspicious and hostile, the Austrians watched the crowds collected to do honour to his memory. A dead Dandolo, with the memories clustering round the name, was still to be feared. In the middle of the funeral service a message from the authorities forbade his burial in the suburban cemetery to which it had been arranged that his body should be borne. But the prohibition was disregarded. The original intention was carried out, an innumerable multitude following the coffin, with its tricoloured wreath, to the place where it was to find sepulture. And a sudden cry arose—a cry which must have sounded ominously in the ears of the Austrians as they looked on, armed but afraid to interfere—‘*Viva l’Italia, viva gli eroi Italiani!*’

## CONCLUSION

SUCH a series of sketches as have been given here are, in some sort, melancholy reading. Nor is it possible, by the nature of the case, that it should be otherwise. For the revolutionist, flinging himself against the solid obstructive mass presented by the society of his day, can scarcely fail to be shattered in the process, and whether or not his work survive, it is unlikely that he himself will escape destruction.

Out of those whose stories have been told in the present volume, Harrison and Saint-Just perished upon the scaffold; Toussaint in prison; Mitchel, after less than three years of the fight, was sent to finish the rest of his life in exile; Manara, at twenty-three, died, with most of his comrades, upon the field of battle. Nor is there anything exceptional in such terminations to the revolutionist's career. They represent, on the contrary, its natural and logical end.

If he does not make his reckoning with such chances, and enter upon his hazardous enterprise with a full appreciation of the perils of the way, it is not that he has been left without warning. To say nothing of the standing menace contained in the facts of history, it is astonishing how large a

number of persons have made it their special business, ever since man took his place as a wayfarer upon this globe, to deface the highways and byways of life by the multitudinous finger-posts pointing out the dangers of every road. Each prophet of evil has a discovery of his own in this line to proclaim. Death, intending travellers are admonished, lies in this direction, disaster in that; and since every thoroughfare hitherto explored has been found to lead in the end to the first, and with a scarcely inferior degree of certainty to the second, it is manifest that an attempt to controvert the statement is labour lost. But a single truth is not seldom a lie, and its complement is necessary before it can be accepted as a sound working maxim. If danger lies on the right hand, the left is not therefore exempt from peril; and you must be ready to promise a man immortality before you can scare him into inaction by the menace of death.

But though all this may be theoretically admitted, the practice of setting up these danger signals still continues, and has moreover an air of benevolence about it that makes a protest come near to an act of irreligion. The world's pathways, it is contended, are strewn with the bones of those whose destruction might at least have been retarded by a timely attention to the cautions thus bestowed; and the fates of those vindicators of rights of way who go by the name of revolutionists are, in particular, cited to deter others from following in their steps.

It is true that these adventurers are precluded

by natural causes from giving evidence in the case. It is not possible to put a Harrison, a Toussaint, or a Saint-Just into the witness-box, and elicit their regrets for the path they elected to pursue; and in the absence of testimony so conclusive, it may be pardonable to question whether, were it forthcoming, it would be found to point altogether in the anticipated direction. There is no subject upon which men are more likely to differ than upon the method to be pursued in order to get the most out of life. 'I did not want to find, when I came to die,' said Thoreau, justifying his own experiment, 'that I had never lived . . . living is so dear.' With the sentiment thus expressed few will disagree; but when it comes to settling upon the surest means of profiting by the span of life allotted to man here below, there will scarcely be fewer opinions than there are those to form them.

Nor is it so simple a matter as might be expected, to turn men, by a mathematical demonstration of probable consequences, from their course. 'God,' says Sir Walter Raleigh, 'Who is the Author of all our tragedies, hath written out for us, and appointed us all the parts we have to play'; and in this supreme Ruler of destinies, by whatever name they may elect to call Him, a Saint-Just, laying with blood-stained hands the foundations of the paradise upon earth on which his eyes were set, may have been scarcely less a believer than a Toussaint, as he responded with simple faith to a call from heaven. There are dreams rendering men indifferent to danger, and aims which supersede the



allurements of paths of pleasantness and peace. To anticipate that the adventurer will be turned from his purpose by a prediction of misfortune is to betray a confidence in the docility of human nature, far from being borne out by facts. It is, on the contrary, scarcely too much to assert that the majority of men, at the period of life when such warnings are oftenest called for, certified that death was lying in wait for them at the other side of the wall, would only be stimulated the more to try a fall with the enemy.

Even, however, when the unlikelihood of the deterrent effect of remonstrance is admitted, it will probably be urged, in defence of the finger-post, that a man likes to choose his course with open eyes, and to know where he is going. But, granted that the argument is founded upon a general truth—and there are dissenters enough from the assumed desire to constitute a minority worth taking into account—moralists and philosophers will be ready to agree, with quite uncommon unanimity, that what a man imagines himself to want is by no means invariably that which it will profit him to possess, and that circumstances may easily occur when the exercise of a discriminating charity will withhold it. The exchange of ignorance for knowledge is in particular not seldom a doubtful bargain, and it will scarcely be denied that to take it for granted that the generality of human kind will be the happier for being told whither they are bound, unfortunately implies altogether too optimistic a view of the situation. If

we are fated to be lost in a morass, it will not materially minister to our cheerfulness to be apprised beforehand of our approaching doom ; nor will a man fight the better for being convinced that he will fall.

Furthermore, if it be allowed that the prophecy of evil is unlikely to increase the sum of human happiness, it is still less open to question that to reduce dreams to certainty, were the transmutation possible, would be the destruction of quite an incalculable amount of hope. The mist which covers to-morrow, even if to-morrow is not to be wholly a day of disaster, is a possession of no little value ; and taking the possibilities of life, good and bad, fairly into account, and weighing them against anticipation, we may well hesitate before robbing our neighbour of his uncertainties. It is better, if he is minded for adventure, that he should set out with a sanguine heart on the quest of the unattainable, than that learning beyond possibility of doubt that his ideal is not to be realised, and taking that melancholy conviction home, he should resign himself, in sullen submission, to toil all his life as a city clerk, or accept a post at the receipt of custom. The worldly wise, from their unenviable vantage-ground of knowledge—if knowledge it be—cannot be too careful how they destroy other men's hopes.

Neither must it be forgotten that the man who seeks a better country, spiritual or temporal, for himself or for his race, already—since faith, as we know, is the substance of things hoped for—in a sense enjoys the possession of it. It is a treasure

of which those who labour to discourage his enterprise will do ill to deprive him. How large a proportion, one wonders, of the Israelitish army would have set out from Egypt had a sign-post, telling as usual a half truth, warned them that the road they were pursuing terminated at the Red Sea? Or how many wanderers might have retraced their steps and gone back into bondage, had mile-stones—after our officious modern fashion—indicating their rate of progress, demonstrated to each pilgrim the improbability that he would take personal possession of the promised land? Yet who will deny that death in the desert, with that illuminating hope to cheer him, was better than the lifelong labour of making bricks without straw; just as Manara's heroic failure, or L'Ouverture's protracted agony, or the melancholy ends of some at least of those '*sceptiques pleins de foi*,' who served as pioneers in the reconstruction of French society, were surely to be preferred to the ignoble and selfish lives of men who lifted no hand to emancipate a race, or regenerate a nation, or who had never made the attempt to materialise the dream of liberty and brotherhood. There is a generosity and a faith in breasting the unknown, and in stepping forward in the night, that can never be equalled by action based upon a nice calculation of chances; and, to quote a saying of Cromwell's, a man never rises so high as when he knows not whither he is going. Though failure should be the result, it is better to have been beaten than never to have fought, better to expect than even to have; nor can a man be pronounced

wholly unfortunate till he has lost the second of the theological virtues.

It will therefore be seen that the rashness of those who, as the saying is, go out to meet misfortune—and it cannot be denied that the revolutionist belongs to that class—has something to be said for it, even from the standpoint of those to whom the happiness of the adventurer himself is the object principally to be considered. The truth is, that the eagerness displayed to prevent the taking of a wrong turning—this over-heedful husbandry of force—is based upon a misconception, and is due to the fallacy which places success at the problematical goal alone. Whereas—meaning by the term anything that is worth striving for—it is in truth scattered all along the path, and laurels grow in every wayside hedge; so that whether the traveller falls out of the march at the outset, or in the middle, or at the end, is no such great matter after all. One would sometimes imagine, from the safeguards with which existence is surrounded, that an eternity was at stake. But once master the fact—so certain, yet so strangely, bewilderingly elusive—that the end, as far as life on this planet is concerned, is one of hurrying and predestined failure, and that indefinite prolongation of happiness here below, with the skull and cross-bones staring us in the face, is out of the question, and it is astonishing how affairs are simplified and anxieties dwindle, until the issues, resolving themselves into the alternatives of a roadside grave, or a decent funeral in the cemetery, or a sepulchre

with a fitting inscription in the family vault, do not seem worth taking seriously into account.

A more important question than that of ultimate success—again from the point of view of personal happiness—is concerned with the inquiry whether, in the generality of instances, it is possible for the revolutionist, confronted with the realities of the struggle, and gradually learning to measure the nature and limitation of the probable results, to preserve the sanguine temper he set out with upon his quest. In his case, more than in that of other men, the saying is probably true, that the loved of the gods die young. 'It is well that Manara and his comrades did not live to compare reality with their dreams. In the case of those, like Toussaint or John Mitchel, whose days are prolonged till they have seen the lights shift, morning become noonday, and noon fade into evening, disappointment is inevitable; whilst a more bitter experience still must be the lot of toilers who, as in the French Revolution, were doomed to see the work they had begun disfigured almost beyond recognition. Even for the more fortunate, whose labours have been crowned with success, the objects for which their lives have been given may, likely enough, change their relative values, and lose part at least of their glamour. But to conclude that hope is therefore extinguished would be rash. 'Experience,' says St. Paul, 'worketh hope.' Though the words may seem to some of us to contain a paradox, there are men who have proved them true.

Of those who have thrown in their lot with the ranks of revolution or reform, some, finding the taxes of the outlaw too heavy, have doubtless repented their choice. Others, going further, have taken their hands from the plough; whether, like Pius ix., confronted with consequences not included in their reckoning; or lured by the vision of ease and comfort; or, like Benedict Arnold, swayed by still baser motives. Others, it may be, have, not inexcusably, shrunk from the defacement of their own work, and the marring of the ideal inseparable from human endeavour. Desertion from the camp is an inevitable feature of the struggle. The path of the honest reformer is beset with difficulties. No respectable mediocrity avails him. 'The virtues of society,' says Emerson, 'are vices of the saint. The terror of reform is the discovery that we must cast away our virtues, or what we have always esteemed such, into the same pit that has consumed our grosser vices.' It needs a courageous as well as a strong spirit, to persevere through weariness and disillusion, and to retain faith in a truth, notwithstanding the accretions by which it is obscured. It is no wonder if some, failing to stand the test, have abandoned their place at the helm. Others, however, have been gifted with a clearer vision. 'To my mind,' wrote Frederick Robertson, at a time when revolution was in the very air, and had been caricatured in some instances, to use his own expression, into devilry, 'to my mind it is a world full of hope, even to bursting. . . . Some outlines of a Kingdom of Christ begin to glimmer, albeit

very faintly, and far off, perhaps, by many centuries. Nevertheless, a few strokes of the rough sketch by a master hand are worth the seeing, though no one knows yet how they shall be filled up. And those bold, free, dashing marks are made too plainly to be ever done out again. Made in blood as they always are, and made somewhat rudely; but the Master Hand is visible through the great red splotches on the canvas of the universe.'

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